

**OPERATION
ENDURING FREEDOM
OR
GLOBAL
SUPREMACY**

(A Compilation of Writings on Post-Sept. 11 Event)

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CONTENTS

Introduction	F. R. Faridi	5
1. The New War Against Terror	Noam Chomsky	9
2. Responding with Terror	Aijaz Ahmed	21
3. Counter-Terror won't Work	Praful Bidwai	33
4. The Algebra of Infinite Justice	Arundhati Roy	39
5. The Abyss of the Future	Noam Chomsky	49
6. Chomsky's Counter-Charge	Noam Chomsky	53
7. 'Brutality smeared in peanut butter' Why America Must Stop the War Now	Arundhati Roy	57
8. Who Says It's Not a War on Islam?	Abid Ullah Jan	65
9. A Hornet's Nest	Rajiv Dhavan	71
10. US Planned War in Afghanistan Long Before September 11	Patrick Martin	75
11. None Jailed Appears Linked to Attacks!	Josh Meyer and Eric Lichtblau	87
12. Avoid Osama's Trap	Bernard Haykel	93
13. The Consequences of American Foreign Policy	Azam Saeed	97
14. Hate-mongers Calling for Blood!	Nector Carreon	101
15. This War is a Fraud	John Pilger	103
16. The United States and Humanity	Zamiruddin	109
17. Sleeping Death	Hasan Suroor	113
18. Yes, US and Israel are Two Sides of the Same Coin!	Khalid al-Macena	117
19. Were the Israelis in WTC Warned in Advance?	P. K. Niaz	121
20. Blossoms in the Dust	Mir Ali Husain	125

21.	'Bush didn't Know What He was Doing'	Selig Harrison	131
22.	'If They are Guilty, Where is the Evidence?'	Robert Fisk	133
23.	US Campaign Against Afghanistan is Illegal	Brian J. Foleys	141
24.	Will Anyone Dare to Ask Why?	David Duke	149
25.	America's War	Sukumar Murali	157
26.	America's Frankenstein	Praveen Swami	167
27.	The Split Screen Syndrome	Praveen Swami	171
28.	When the Moon Landed in America	Pankaj Mishra	173
29.	Our Freedom, Their Terror	Praful Bidwai	181
30.	The Story of the Taliban is Over, but...	Zafar Agha	187
31.	Expert Claims Oil Interests Ruined US-Taliban Talks	Guillaume Dasquie	191
32.	The Clash of Civilizations a Questionable Thesis	Syed Arif Hussaini	195
33.	Beyond Bin Laden	Fred Halliday	199
34.	A Real Life Bad Guy in Town	Sanjay Suri	203
35.	Another War on Terror Another Proxy Army	Robert Fisk	207
36.	Follies of Americana	Pushpa M. Bhargava	213
37.	Retaliation will be Full of Risks, Hard Choices	Paul Richter	219
38.	Holiday from History	Shastri	221
39.	Eye-for-an-Eye will Make US Blind	C. Jayanthi	225
40.	Case Against Osama Thin on Facts: Experts	Hasan Suroor	229
41.	After Attacks, It's Time for Human Rights Violations	Lois Romano & David S. Falppis	231
42.	Retribution, not Revenge	Rajeev Bhargava	233

INTRODUCTION

We are happy to present to all concerned citizens of our country a collection of randomly selected articles on US-led war against Taliban and Osama bin Laden, subsequently elevated and expanded into global war against terrorism. These writings appeared in reputed journals in England, Europe and India.

In the dust and din of US fury against perpetrators of dastardly attack on World Trade Center (WTC) most people and governments all over the world appeared to agree with the hype showered on the "nobility" and "humanism" of the campaign against Terrorism. Few people dared to question the genuineness of US resolve to crush Terrorism of Taliban. Voices of dissent were scarcely heard. US media served as the surrogate of administration.

The attack on WTC and Pentagon severely hurt the pride of the sole superpower in its invincibility. For the US public has been always lulled into the belief that what mattered was their own country, the world outside does not exist for all practical purposes. Hence, the miseries of the vast number of people outside US frontiers deserved only charities doled out in condescension in times of natural calamities and internal strife. Human blood was precious only when it flowed into American veins. Civilizational arrogance is the trademark of USA, as expressed by Reagan earlier that Paradise itself will be guarded by USA mariners.

However, in this campaign the most important casualty has been the very values of democracy, justice and freedom for which American people took justifiable pride. These values were sought to be wantonly trampled upon in USA itself. Far more significant has been US policy that has unleashed forces of fascism and dictatorial tendencies all over the world. Evidences of the trend both oral and action oriented are legion

as any study of the setback to human rights and democratic movement in the third world would reveal.

Media hype and US foreign policy declarations have also served to eclipse the brazen pursuit of military and economic domination of USA. Is it only Taliban-inspired terror that USA has targeted? Or under the thick veneer of Operation Freedom, it is lordship over oil wealth of Middle East (and also Afghanistan), which USA seeks unabashedly? Or by extending the so-called war against terrorism, the USA has been trying to pursue global military superiority? (See its efforts to station its military forces all over West Asia, in Pakistan and also India.)

Earlier, USA has been scarcely satisfied with its moves in nuclear weapons anti-proliferation treaties, the World Trade Agreements, IMF & World Bank combine package of reforms and promotion of free trade and capital movement.

Hence, the attack on Afghanistan is a God-given gift to turn its economic strategies into military strategy to demonstrate its superiority over the world.

This campaign has a culturally sinister motive as well. All cultural systems that differ in values from America and all educational enterprises that cultivate values distinct from materialistic and permissive values of American life are deemed to harbour terrorism. Even institutions of religious teachings in a country like Saudi Arabia have been termed as centres that nurture terrorism. In this sinister campaign Islam is the focus. Huntington's thesis of clash of civilizations has focussed on Islam as the formidable foe of Western civilization that disguised an invitation to West to prepare for future cultural war against Islam. That is evident in the first flush of condemnation of attack on WTC by a senator calling upon the administration to finish Islam and the outburst of President Bush as he called USA war against terrorism as a 'Crusade'.

The American arrogance is evident even in the puzzlement of a moderate Collin Powell who wondered why people hate America. In an expression of injured innocence he is reported to have remarked: We are so good, so civilized and so freedom loving. The US President has called Iraq, Iran and North Korea as axis of evil. This arrogance is born of

downright hypocrisy of American foreign policy throughout the recent decades.

Fortunately, pertinent questions have been raised against the motives of American war against terrorism and its arrogant categorisation of the world into those with us and those against us, and defining the latter as supporters of terrorism.

The articles collected in this volume raise these very issues. They raise hope in the future of humanity and values of freedom and democracy. It is heartening to note that moral courage to dissent is still alive and kicking. There are a number of outstanding intellectuals, human rights activists, social thinkers and journalists who still dare to question not only the parameters of American policies but its ultimate motives as well. American frenzy to crush Taliban and its declared intent to curb terrorism all over the world threaten the values of freedom justice and amount to an arrogant betrayal of these very values so brilliantly enshrined in the American constitution and other democratic dispensations.

We consider it our duty to highlight voices of sanity and dissent in order to sustain our hope in the future of humanity at large. These articles also strengthen our resolve to preserve and nourish the plurality of cultures and civilisations which mankind has come to realise after an arduous journey of history.

These questions are relevant also to the current situation in our own country, where some people scarcely hide their glee on the unidimensional focus of the global war against terrorism. While condemning terrorism they over look the fact that state-sponsored terrorism is worse. It may negate the very values it seeks to defend.

Many of these writings share the anguish born of a dispassionate analysis of the events unleashed by the vengeful response of US-led coalition against terrorism. We must realise that the fascist colour of war against terrorism will set at naught all precious achievements of mankind. In its zeal to crush terrorism it has released forces detrimental to freedom, justice rule of law and above all the choice to exist in a plural world.

No power on earth, not even the US, can wish away the vast multitude of people who differ. The only alternative is to learn to live peacefully in a world designed to be plural as superbly expressed by the Qur'an: 'Had Allah so willed He could make you one community.' History records grim stories of tyrants of one creed killing millions belonging to different creeds but they failed to decimate them. From the ashes of vanquished people new fire was relit. Many of the authors emphasise the fact that violence only breeds violence. Where the victims are weak they resort to smouldering fire of hate and rancour. A world where hatred flourishes is certainly not a happy place to live in.

Terrorism is not the inherent property of the downtrodden and uncivilised people. Nor civil life is the prerogative of a particular culture only. In all its manifestations throughout history it has been ignited by profound desperation, helplessness of the oppressed against the oppressor or deep-seated grief of the victims of deprivation and denial of meagre victuals of life. The current world is a grim spectacle of unbelievably rich juxtaposed against the starving millions, expropriators against homeless and evicted people such as Palestinians, of disease and hunger arraigned against opulence and brazen consumerism and brilliantly lightened mansions arraigned again dark alleys of human creatures.

Unless urgent and effective measures are taken to address these roots of injustice and tyranny, terrorism will continue to breed. Wealth and opulence have always bred violence and it will continue to do so in future.

We hope and pray that these writings will help kindle the fire of real humanism in US. More such efforts should be made earnestly and urgently.

F. R. Faridi

The New War Against Terror

Noam Chomsky

Noam Chomsky, Institute Professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), is in India in November 2001 to give a series of public lectures. Renowned scholar, founder of the modern science of linguistics, social theorist, political analyst, media critic, author of many books, winner of many awards and prizes, he has been described by an intellectual biographer as having "a position in the history of ideas on a par with that of Darwin or Descartes". *The New York Times* once described Chomsky as "arguably the most important intellectual alive" and on another occasion as "perhaps the clearest voice of dissent in American history". He is also the rarest of intellectuals – one who has a fan following across the globe. Here the 73-year-old polymath addresses five "closely related" critical questions raised by the current international crisis focussed on the U.S.-led war on Afghanistan. (*Frontline*, Nov. 23, 2001)

NOAM CHOMSKY

I'm going to assume two conditions. The first one is just what I assume to be recognition of fact. That is that the events of September 11 were a horrendous atrocity – probably the most devastating instant human toll of any crime in history, outside of war. The second assumption has to do with the goals. I'm assuming that our goal is that we are interested in reducing the likelihood of such crimes, whether they are against us or against someone else.

If you don't accept those two assumptions, then what I say will not be addressed to you. If we do accept them, then a number of questions arise.

One question, and by far the most important one, is: what is happening right now? Implicit in that is: what can we do about it? The second has to do with the very common assumption that what happened on September 11 is a historic event, one which will change history. I think it's true. It was a historic event and the question we should be asking is: exactly why? The third question has to do with the title, "The War Against Terrorism". Exactly what is it? And there is a related question, namely, what is terrorism? The fourth question,

which is narrower but important, has to do with the origins of the crimes of September 11. And the fifth question that I want to talk a little about is what policy options there are in fighting this war against terrorism and dealing with the situations that led to it.

1. What's Happening Right Now?

Starvation of three to four million people. I'll talk about the situation in Afghanistan. According to *The New York Times*, there are seven to eight million people in Afghanistan on the verge of starvation. That was true before September 11. They were surviving on international aid. On September 16, *The Times* reported that the United States demanded from Pakistan the elimination of truck convoys that provide much of the food and other supplies to Afghanistan's civilian population. As far as I could determine, there was no reaction in the United States or for that matter in Europe to the demand to impose massive starvation on millions of people. The threat of military strikes around that time forced the removal of international aid workers that crippled the assistance programmes.

The World Food Programme, the U.N. programme, which is the main one by far, was able to resume after three weeks, in early October. They began to resume, at a lower level, food shipments. They don't have international aid workers within, so the distribution system is hampered.

After the first week of bombing, *The New York Times* reported on a back page, inside a column on something else, that by the arithmetic of the United Nations, there will soon be 7.5 million Afghans in acute need of even a loaf of bread and there are only a few weeks left before the harsh winter will make deliveries to many areas totally impossible. But with bombs falling, the delivery rate is down to half of what is needed. Casual comment. Which tells us that Western civilisation is anticipating the slaughter of three-four million people or something like that. On the same day, the leader of Western civilisation dismissed with contempt, once again, offers of negotiation for delivery of the alleged target, Osama

bin laden, and a request for some evidence to substantiate the demand for total capitulation. On the same day, the Special Rapporteur of the U.N. in charge of food pleaded with the United States to stop the bombing to try to save millions of victims. As far as I'm aware, that was unreported.

Looks like what's happening is some sort of silent genocide. It also gives a good deal of insight into the elite culture, the culture that we are part of. It indicates that plans are being made and programmes implemented on the assumption that they may lead to the death of several million people in the next few months.

What's happening now is very much under our control. We can do a lot to affect what's happening.

2. Why was It a Historic Event?

Let's turn to the question of the historic event that took place on September 11. It was a historic event because there was a change. The change was the direction in which the guns were pointed. That's new, radically new....

3. What is the War Against Terrorism?

'What is the war against terrorism?' and a side question, 'What's terrorism?' The war against terrorism has been described in high places as a struggle against a plague, cancer, which is spread by barbarians, by "depraved opponents of civilisation itself". That's a feeling that I share. The words I'm quoting, however, happen to be from 20 years ago, [from] President Reagan and his Secretary of State. The Reagan administration came into office 20 years ago declaring that the war against international terrorism would be the core of our foreign policy. And it was the core of our foreign policy. The Reagan administration responded to this plague spread by "depraved opponents of civilisation" itself by creating an extraordinary international terrorist network, totally unprecedented in scale, which carried out massive atrocities all over the world.

I'll just mention the Regan-U.S. war against Nicaragua, which left tens of thousands of people dead, the country ruined, perhaps beyond recovery. Nicaragua did respond. They didn't

respond by setting off bombs in Washington. They responded by taking it to the World Court... the U.N. Security Council... the [U.N.] General Assembly. Nicaragua tried all the [international legal] measures. They don't work in a world that is ruled by force.

This case is uncontroversial but it's by no means the most extreme. We gain a lot of insight into our own culture and society and what's happening now by asking 'How much do we know about all this? How much do we talk about it? How much do you learn about it in school? How much is it all over the front pages?'

For the first time there were official orders given to the terrorist army to attack what are called "soft targets", meaning undefended civilian targets, and to keep away from the Nicaraguan army. They were able to do that because the United States had total control of the air over Nicaragua and the mercenary army was supplied with advanced communication equipment — it wasn't a guerrilla army in the normal sense — and could get instructions about the disposition of the Nicaraguan army forces so they could attack agricultural collectives, health clinics, and so on.

What was the reaction here? It worked. When Nicaragua finally succumbed to superpower assault, commentators openly and cheerfully lauded the success of the methods that were adopted and described them accurately.

That is the culture in which we live and it reveals several facts. One is the fact that terrorism works. It doesn't fail. Violence usually works. That's world history. Secondly, it's a very serious analytic error to say, as is commonly done, that terrorism is the weapon of the weak. Like other means of violence, it's primarily a weapon of the strong, overwhelmingly, in fact.

It is held to be a weapon of the weak because the strong also control the doctrinal systems and their terror doesn't count as terror. Now, that's close to universal. Terrorism is not the weapon of the weak. It is the weapon of those who are against 'us', whoever 'us' happens to be. And if you can find a historical exception to that, I'd be interested in seeing it.

It was happening elsewhere in the world too, take say Africa. During the Reagan years alone, U.S./U.K.-backed South African attacks against the neighbouring countries killed about a million-and-a-half people and left \$60 billion in damage and countries destroyed. And if we go around the world, we can add more examples.

What is terrorism? There is an official definition. A brief statement of it taken from a U.S. army manual is that terror is the calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to attain political or religious ideological goals through intimidation, coercion, or instilling fear. That's terrorism. That's a fair enough definition. The problem is that it can't be accepted because if you accept that, all the wrong consequences follow.

If you take a look at the definition of Low Intensity Warfare, which is official U.S. policy, you find that it is a very close paraphrase of what I just read. In fact, Low Intensity Conflict is just another name for terrorism. That's why all countries, as far as I know, call whatever horrendous acts they are carrying out, counter-terrorism. We happen to call it Counter-Insurgency or Low Intensity Conflict.

There are some other problems. Some of them came up in December 1987, at the peak of the first war on terrorism, that's when the furore over the plague was peaking. The United Nations General Assembly passed a very strong resolution against terrorism, condemning the plague in the strongest terms, calling on every state to fight against it in every possible way. One country, Honduras, abstained. Two votes against – the usual two, United States and Israel.

[Consider] the Israeli-occupied territories, now going into its 35th year. Supported primarily by the United States in blocking a diplomatic settlement for 30 years now. And we can't allow anyone to struggle against a military occupation when it is one that we support.

None of this was ever reported and none of it appeared in the annals of terrorism. The reason is that it has got the wrong people holding the guns. You have to carefully hone the definitions and the scholarship so that you come out with the

right conclusions. Otherwise it is not respectable scholarship and honourable journalism.

Well, these are some of problems that are hampering the effort to develop a comprehensive treaty against terrorism. Maybe we should have an academic conference or something to try to see if we can figure out a way of defining terrorism so that it comes out with just the right answers, not the wrong answers. That won't be easy.

4. What are the Origins of the September 11 Crimes?

Here we have to make a distinction between two categories, which shouldn't be run together. One is the actual agent of the crime; the other is kind of a reservoir of at least sympathy, sometimes support that they appeal to even among people who very much oppose the criminals and the actions. And those are two different things.

Category 1: The Likely Perpetrators

With regard to the perpetrators, in a certain sense we are not really clear. The United States either is unable or unwilling to provide any meaningful evidence. There was a sort of a play [some weeks ago] when Tony Blair was set up to try to present it. Whatever the PR reasons were, he gave a presentation, which was in serious circles considered so absurd that it was barely even mentioned.

So why bother with the evidence? It is astonishing to me how weak the evidence was. Remember this was after weeks of the most intensive investigation in history of all the intelligence services of the western world working overtime trying to put something together. It ended up about where it started, with a *prima facie* case.

Let's assume that it is true. Let's assume that – it looked obvious the first day, still does – that the actual perpetrators come from the radical Islamic, here called, fundamentalist, networks of which the bin Laden network is undoubtedly a significant part. Whether they were involved or not, nobody knows.

That's the background, those networks. Well, where do they come from? We know all about that. Nobody knows about that better than the CIA because it helped organise them and it nurtured them for a long time. They were brought together in the 1980s actually by the CIA and its associates elsewhere: Pakistan, Britain, France, Saudi Arabia, Egypt... The idea was to try to harass the Russians, the common enemy.

We could develop this terrific mercenary army. Not a small one, maybe 100,000 men or so, bringing together the best killers they could find, who were radical Islamist fanatics from around North Africa, Saudi Arabia... anywhere they could find them. They were often called the Afghanis but many of them, like bin Laden, were not Afghans. They were brought by the CIA and its friends from elsewhere.

Meanwhile, the terrorist forces that the CIA was organising, arming, and training were pushing their own agenda, right away. It was not secret. One of the first acts was in 1981 when they assassinated the President of Egypt, who was one of the most enthusiastic of their creators. In 1983 one suicide bomber drove the U.S. military out of Lebanon. And it continued.

After 1989, when the Russians had withdrawn, they simply turned elsewhere. Since then they have been fighting in Chechnya, Western China, Bosnia, Kashmir, South-East Asia, North Africa, all over the place.

They are telling us just what they think. The United States wants to silence the one free television channel in the Arab world because it's broadcasting a whole range of things from Powell over to Osama bin Laden. So the U.S. is now joining the repressive regimes of the Arab world that try to shut it up. But if you listen to it, if you listen to what bin Laden says, it's worth it.

Their prime enemy is what they call the corrupt and oppressive authoritarian brutal regimes of the Arab world and when they say that they get quite a resonance in the region. They also want to defend and they want to replace them by properly Islamist governments. That's when they lose the people of the region. But up till then, they are with them. From

their point of view, even Saudi Arabia, the most extreme fundamentalist state in the world, I suppose, short of the Taliban, which is an offshoot, even that's not Islamist enough for them.

Also, they want to defend Muslims elsewhere. From their point of view, they are defending the Muslims against the infidels.

Now why did they turn against the United States? Well, that had to do with what they call the U.S. invasion of Saudi Arabia. In 1990, the U.S. established permanent military bases in Saudi Arabia, which from their point of view is comparable to a Russian invasion of Afghanistan except that why Saudi Arabia is more important. That's the home of the holiest sites of Islam. And that is when their activities turned against the United States. If you recall, in 1993, they tried to blow up the World Trade Centre. Got part of the way, but not the whole way and that was only part of it. The plans were to blow up the U.N. building, the Holland and Lincoln tunnels, the FBI building. I think there were others on the list.

One person who is jailed for that, finally, among the people who were jailed, was an Egyptian cleric who had been brought into the United States over the objections of the Immigration Service, thanks to the intervention of the CIA, which wanted to help out their friend. A couple of years later he was blowing up the World Trade Centre. And this has been going on all over.

Category 2: What about the reservoir of support?

What about the reservoir of support? Well, it's not hard to find out what that is. One of the good things that have happened since September 11 is that some of the press and some of the discussion has begun to open up to some of these things. The best one to my knowledge is *The Wall Street Journal*, which right away began to run, within a couple of days, searching serious reports, on the reasons why the people of the region, even though they hate bin Laden and despise everything he is doing, nevertheless support him in many ways and even regard him as the "conscience" of Islam", as one said.

Now *The Wall Street Journal* and others are surveying the opinion of their friends: bankers, professionals, international lawyers, businessmen tied to the United States, people who they interview in MacDonald's restaurant...wearing fancy American clothes.

And their attitudes are very explicit and very clear and in many ways consonant with the message of bin Laden and others. They are very angry at the United States because of its support of authoritarian and brutal regimes; its intervention to block any move towards democracy; its intervention to stop economic development; its policies of devastating the civilian societies of Iraq while strengthening Saddam Hussein. And they remember, even if we prefer not to, that the United States and Britain supported Saddam Hussein right through his worst atrocities, including the gassing of the Kurds – bin Laden brings that up constantly – and they know it even if we don't want to.

And, of course, their support for the Israeli military occupation, which is harsh and brutal. It is now in its 35th year. The U.S. has been providing the overwhelming economic, military, and diplomatic support for it, and still does. And they know that and they don't like it. Especially when that is paired with U.S. policy towards Iraq, towards the Iraqi civilian society, which is getting destroyed. When bin Laden gives those reasons, people recognise it and support it.

If you want to live with your head buried in the sand and pretend they hate us because they're opposed to globalisation, that's why they killed Sadat 20 years ago, and fought the Russians, tried to blow up the World Trade Centre in 1993, if you want to believe that, [it is] comforting. And it is a great way to make sure that violence escalates.

5. *What are the Policy Options?*

Well, there are a number. A narrow policy option from the beginning was to follow the advice of really far out radicals like the Pope. The Vatican immediately said, look, it's a horrible terrorist crime. In the case of crime, you try to find the perpetrators, you bring them to justice, you try them. You don't kill innocent civilians. If somebody robs my house and I think

the guy who did it is probably in the neighbourhood across the street, I don't go out with an assault rifle and kill everyone in that neighbourhood. And there are plenty of precedents for that.

When the IRA [Irish Republican Army] set off bombs in London, which is pretty serious business, one possible response [from Britain] would have been to destroy Boston, which is the source of most of the financing. And of course to wipe out West Belfast. Well, you know, quite apart from the feasibility, it would have been criminal idiocy. The way to deal with it was pretty much what they did. You know, find the perpetrators; bring them to trial; and look for the reasons.

Because these things don't come out of nowhere. They come from something. Whether it is a crime in the streets or a monstrous terrorist crime or anything else. And usually if you look at the reasons, some of them are legitimate and ought to be addressed, independently of the crime. They ought to be addressed because they are legitimate. And that's the way to deal with it.

There are many such examples.

But there are problems with that. One problem is that the United States does not recognise the jurisdiction of international institutions. So it can't go to them. It has rejected the jurisdiction of the World Court. It has refused to ratify the International Criminal Court. The U.S. doesn't want to present evidence because it wants to be able to act without evidence. The U.S. probably could have [got U.N.] Security Council authorisation, but it didn't want it. And it didn't want it because it follows a long-standing principle and that is that we have the right to act unilaterally. We don't care about evidence. We don't care about negotiation. We don't care about treaties. We are the strongest guy around; the toughest thug on the block. We do what we want.

Well, what about the reactions in Afghanistan? The initial proposal, the initial rhetoric, was for a massive assault which would kill many people visibly and also an attack on other countries in the region. Well, the Bush administration wisely backed off from that. It would simply be like opening recruiting offices for bin Laden all over the region. That's

actly what he wants. And it would be extremely harmful to their own interests.

So they backed off that one. And they are turning to a kind of silent genocide. You can figure it out if you do the arithmetic.

A sensible proposal, which is on the verge of being considered, is a U.N. initiative. A U.N. initiative to bring together elements within Afghanistan that would try to construct something from the wreckage. It's conceivable that that could work, with plenty of support and no interference.

We certainly want to reduce the level of terror, certainly not escalate it. There is one easy way to do that and therefore it's never discussed. Namely, stop participating in it. That would automatically reduce the level of terror enormously. We ought to make it possible to discuss it.

Beyond that, we should rethink the kinds of policies – and Afghanistan is not the only one – in which we organise and train terrorist armies. That has effects. We're seeing some of these effects now. September 11 is one.

Rethink the policies that are creating a reservoir of support. Exactly what the bankers, lawyers and so on are saying in places like Saudi Arabia. On the streets it's much more bitter, as you can imagine. That's possible. You know, those policies aren't graven in stone.

And furthermore, there are opportunities. It's hard to find many rays of light in the last couple of weeks, but one of them is that there is an increased openness. Lots of issues are open for discussion, even in elite circles, certainly among the general public that were not a couple of weeks ago. Among the general public, I think there is more openness and willingness to think about things that were under the rug. These are opportunities and they should be used – at least by people who accept the goal of trying to reduce the level of violence and terror, including potential threats that are extremely severe and could make even September 11 pale into insignificance.

Responding with Terror*

Aijaz Ahmad

The date of September 11 has a powerful resonance in the annals of modern history. Twenty-eight years ago on this date, the Central Intelligence Agency-sponsored coup of General Augusto Pinochet overthrew the democratically elected socialist government of President Salvador Allende in Chile and established a regime of terror which killed an estimated 5,000 people in the first few weeks and continued to brutalise Chilean society for some two decades. September 11 was also the date of the Camp David accords which signalled Egypt's final surrender to American imperialism and Israeli Zionism, leaving the Palestinians at the mercy of the latter. And, September 11 was the day when George H. Bush, father of the current President of the United States, made his fateful speech to Congress announcing the war against Iraq – that supreme act of terror which killed an estimated 200,000 people in the course of that brief assault and which has led to the death of at least half a million Iraqi children over the next decade, thanks to the U.S.-dictated blockade of their country.

Betrayal of the Palestinians, the destruction of Iraq! One can reasonably assume that these two great devastations of the Arabo-Muslim world were vivid in the memory of those 19 hijackers on September 11 this year, when they commandeered four civilian aircraft owned by two major U.S. airlines, and mashed three of them into the World Trade Centre (WTC) and the Pentagon – nerve centres of U.S. financial and military power – while committing collective suicide in the process. The White House – the seat of America's political power – was probably to be struck by the fourth aircraft but something in the hijackers' plan went awry. Over 6,000 innocent civilians from

60 countries – some 500 of them from South Asia alone including the son of a close friend of this writer – died within a couple of hours in a calculated and hideous act of terrorism carried out with stunning technical precision.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with their 220,000 dead, are of course the most famous of the numerous cities that the U.S. destroyed around the world in the 20th century with the deliberate, terroristic intent of targeting innocent civilians, just as civilians were targeted in their towns and hamlets alike throughout Indochina during the Vietnam War. The spectacular terror which destroyed the World Trade Centre and killed so many so callously pales in comparison. As one journalist has calculated, the death of 6,000 civilians means that this same level of violence would have to be carried out every day for a whole year for the resulting death toll to match the death toll in Iraq over the past decade. Even so, this was the first time the Americans came to experience what it means for cities to be at the receiving end of such destructive force. This hijacking operation, carried out by less than two dozen individuals, was the largest attack on mainland United States in its history larger than Pearl Harbour, while American armies, assassins and covert operators of all kinds have been active around the globe for well over a century.

And, because being at the receiving end of violence on their own soil was such a novel experience for the U.S. centre of power, this attack on a couple of buildings at the heart of the imperial centre produced effects that no amount of terror and destruction in the outpost – or even the secondary and tertiary centres – of the empire could have produced. An economy that was already slowing down went into a full-fledged downturn and the week following the hijackers' attack proved to be the worst in the history of U.S. finance since July 1933, with the Dow Jones and the Nasdaq posting two-digit losses virtually every day and liquid assets losing \$1.4 trillion of their value over the week. The 30-year Treasury bonds continued to decline day by day amid speculation that further issues of long-term federal debt shall be required to fund the war-without-end.

that is now envisaged, not to speak of the reconstruction costs and coping with the expected recession.

Not just fresh investment but also consumer spending dried up and the working people paid the price. Some 116,000 jobs were lost in the airline industry alone during that week, and the twin fears of war and economic recession led to sales plummeting across North America. An emergency \$15 billion assistance package was quickly put together for the airlines while Boeing, the lynchpin of the American aerospace industry, threatened to fire 31,000 of its employees unless federal aid and subsidy came in. Insurance companies were in similar turmoil, with insurance claims arising from the World Trade Centre tragedy alone expected to exceed \$73 billion. The companies hit back by notifying airports across North America and western Europe that wartime coverage would be withdrawn as of September 24, calculating that governments would be forced to step in with subsidies to renew that coverage, while airports would be forced to shore up their security systems, requiring more outlays and more subsidies.

What happened was unspeakably hideous, cruel, senseless. The loss of thousands of precious lives, many of them cut down in the flower of their youth, has neither a moral nor a political justification. For once, President Bush's speechwriter was right: those who carry out such acts in the name of Allah blaspheme the name of Allah; they hijack Islam in the name of Islam; in the larger, largely humane world of Islam they are a dangerous, fringe element. And a danger to their own people, I would add. In their fit of fundamentalist psychosis they might have believed that they were serving the Palestinian cause. Their actual act was a gift to the Zionists, however, and it was just as well that Yasser Arafat was quick to denounce the act even though Saddam Hussein, true to form, did not have the decency to do so. (Interestingly enough, the Taliban denounced it too, and begged the U.S. to act sensibly and not use the tragedy as justification for further destruction of Afghanistan.)

Taking advantage of the anger and the human anguish arising from the tragedy, and exploiting the fears and

frustrations arising from the prospect of a massive economic recession, the U.S. administration moved quickly to plan a new, globalised, permanent war; to expound what amounts to a new doctrine of America's right to use its might as it pleases; to expand the war-making powers of the Presidency; to put in place a new regime of infinite surveillance; and to demolish whatever restraints had been introduced after the Vietnam War on America's right to undertake assassinations and convert actions across the globe. All this was accompanied with hair-raising rhetoric, which tended at times to portray the coming war as a clash between the Judeo-Christian and Muslim civilisations.

President Bush called his so-called 'war on terrorism' a "Crusade" early on, with no sense of the historical meaning of that word. Only expressions from a wide spectrum of opinion in the Muslim world made him retract that stance and start saying that the war was not against Islam as such but only against certain Muslims. Not to be outdone, the Pentagon named its planned operation 'Infinite Justice', a phrase not even from the Bible but from the lexicon of Christian fundamentalism. Not only Muslims but even liberal Christians were outraged, and Protestant pastors themselves pointed out that 'Infinite Justice' referred to God's own divine justice, an attribute that no human power ought to claim for itself, America's vision of its own omnipotence notwithstanding. The Pentagon sheepishly promised to reconsider the code name.

Congress swiftly passed a resolution authorising Bush to use wide powers in pursuit of this war on terrorism, asserting that "all necessary and appropriate force" could be used against nations, organisations and individuals. No nations or organisations were named, let alone individuals; the President could determine which one was to be attacked as he went along. Nor was there a time limit; he was authorised to act against present danger as well in anticipation of "future attacks". The powers were in some ways wider than a mere declaration of war could have bestowed, since such a declaration would name the country against which the war was to be waged.

Meanwhile, the Justice Department started putting together a package of proposed legislation giving the U.S. intelligence agencies much wider powers to wiretap telephones, enter into people's internet accounts, deport suspected immigrants, seize evidence from suspects, including DNA samples, and obtain information from educational institutions, taxation records and a whole range of public and private agencies without a prior court order or a subsequent court view of the evidence. Attorney-General John Ashcroft is said to be actively considering permanent video surveillance in public places and issuing "smart cards" to all Americans, which the surveillance devices can read electronically so as to distinguish citizen from non-citizen, keep a record of the movements of citizens themselves in public places and to have quick access to personal data linked to each of the "smart cards".

It is also being contemplated that certain immigrants, chosen by intelligence at will, be required to report their activities regularly, like ordinary criminals on bail, and that report security personnel be authorised to interrogate passengers at will and do on-the-spot check of their private baggage without having to explain why and what they are being inspected of.

Bush was blunt. The war is against a network of hundreds of thousands of people spread across some 60 countries, he said, and this war was, in his considered phrase, "a task that never ends". Echoing John Foster Dulles, the rabid foreign Secretary of the Eisenhower years, who said that non-alignment was "immoral", Bush too has put the whole world on notice. If you do not explicitly join us in this global crusade, we will treat you as a hostile country! Enemies are lurking in thousands of little corners, in dozens of countries across the globe, and America will choose its targets as well as its methods and timing of dealing with them as it goes along, according to its own convenience, every country must join up each time, or else it too becomes an enemy and perhaps the next target. This war – "unlike any we have ever seen," he said shall be perpetual but largely secret. Some of it shall be seen

on television, he said, but much shall go unrevealed – even success, he emphasised. Congressional leaders in Washington are now talking of putting the CIA “on a war footing” and cite with admiration the Israeli example of an open policy of assassinations without regard to legal niceties.

It is quite astonishing, though predictable, how quickly one government after another has fallen in line. India of course joined the crusade and offered its airspace and naval facilities with shameless alacrity, putting the lives of Indians at risk of retaliation from those against whom India has offered its facilities. Musharraf then cited India’s pre-emptive oath of allegiance as his reason for offering the same to the U.S.; India would otherwise have a strategic edge, he reasoned. Competitive servilities, one might say.

Tony Blair, who acts as Washington’s agent while doubling as British Prime Minister, flew across the Atlantic to register his presence at the moment of birth of this new era of perpetual war. The European Commission has been scurrying around formulating new policies of cooperation over the question of terrorism, urging individual members of the European Union to allocate more funds and build new systems of surveillance. The Russian Parliament has passed a bill to create an international body to fight terrorism and, aping the U.S. President, calls for the elimination of terrorists as well as the governments, which are said to finance them.

China has been somewhat more shrewd, somewhat more independent; it urges a policy that involves presentation of concrete evidence, does not involve sacrifice of innocent civilians and is within the bounds of international law, but it also promises cooperation if the U.S. was more receptive to its interest in Tibet, Taiwan and Xinjiang – and on the issue of National Missile Defence. The U.S. has, in turn, moved quickly to put in place a new deal facilitating China’s entry into the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The less powerful, many of whom also happen to be directly involved – in some cases even directly targeted – are of course treated differently. On September 14 William F. Burns, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, called in

the Ambassadors of 15 Arab countries, including Syria, which is otherwise one of the 'target' states, as well as the PLO, and imperiously read out to them a list of actions they were to undertake, including the arrest and prosecution of those on their soil who the U.S. designates as 'terrorists'. Everyone seems to have fallen in line, including Yasser Arafat, who has extended "full cooperation" (with the implicit promise that the U.S. would press Israel for an immediate and durable ceasefire). Even President Mohammed Khatami of Iran has made sympathetic noises and expressed the wish to use the occasion to draw closer to the U.S. — which he has been wanting to do for some time. Iran has sealed its borders with Afghanistan, as have Pakistan and Tajikistan. China has gone so far as to seal its borders with Pakistan, blocking the Karakoram highway in the process....

Soon after the hijacked civilian planes smashed into the World Trade Centre, the dominant electronic media set out to identify all sorts of people as the culprits. The PLO and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine were the early favourites. By noon, the focus shifted to Osama bin Laden. By afternoon the channels were abuzz with the idea that bin Laden could not have done it without the diabolical expertise of Saddam Hussein.

The focus on Iraq soon became so alarming that Secretary of State Colin Powell as well as Vice-President Dick Cheney and others were eventually forced to say on record that Iraq had nothing to do with it. Indeed, Powell has been the cool head in Washington, arguing that the U.S. ought not to go around shooting all over West Asia and should judiciously concentrate on one major target at a time, and that Afghanistan should be the first. He is also the one arguing that too much of an escalation against Iraq at this time, when the U.S. wants Arab governments to join it in a coalition against the Taliban, would be counterproductive.

Senior Pakistani statesman Niaz Naik revealed on the BBC a personal conversation he had had with Colin Powell well before the recent events, in which Powell had spelled out

the set of U.S. demands which have now been presented to the spell-bound television-watching world as non-negotiable and a retaliation against the "attack on America". These included that the Taliban hand over Osama bin Laden, and, in Bush's words "deliver to the U.S. authorities all the leaders of Al Qaeda... Give to the U.S. full access to terrorist training camps" – demands which the Taliban would find impossible to accede to even if it wanted to. The emphasis is significant: it is the United States, not some international tribunal or United Nations forces, which shall take custody of these people and places. The tactic too is obvious: present non-negotiable and impossible demands, issue a short notice, and invade. That there shall be an invasion is clear, but there is still a far-reaching debate within the U.S. government as to what kind of invasion it would be.

A decade of the most brutal military and economic warfare without committing ground troops or trying to occupy large chunks of Iraq has not succeeded in toppling Saddam Hussein. Chances of success of that sort of warfare in Afghanistan are even more remote; as one of the Taliban put it, "We don't even have a factory which could be a reasonable military target." Direct landing in Kabul or Kandahar would only turn the Taliban into phantoms scurrying around in the hinterlands, bleeding the U.S. militarily and financially, and winning new allies in the face of a foreign occupation force. Bin Laden's numerous camps are perfectly well known to the Americans since he initially built them with their money and assistance. But he is a moving target, with a widespread following, and with numerous camps, many of which are dug deep under the mountains.

One of the likely scenarios is a round of massive bombings and well-orchestrated commando operations to disorganise and soften up the targets, killing a great many number of people and hoping that many of those killed would be the Taliban and members of Al Qaeda. This could then be followed by actual landing and taking over ghost cities, from which the surviving civilians would have fled, as a prelude to establishing a U.N.-sponsored Afghan administration drawn from among the enemies of the Taliban, and setting down to a

long-term scorched earth operation from some bases inside Afghanistan but mainly from the outside.

Hence, there are two emphases in American pronouncements thus far. Bush emphasised to the U.S. public time and again that there shall be casualties this time and that the campaign shall be prolonged. And, there is enormous pressure on Pakistan, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan to provide base facilities, and upon Russia to use its influence in this regard. The information obtained from Pakistan's Inter-Services intelligence (ISI) would be crucial for even a moderate level of success of the American design. Pakistan's historic involvement in Afghanistan on the side of the Americans and its geopolitical location may yet come to haunt Jaswant Singh's dream of turning India into America's "most allied ally", as Pakistan was once called.

What does all this portend for Afghanistan? It is a country devastated by some two decades of the most brutal warfare and, since the fall of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) government, equally brutal forms of rule. For a population of roughly 26 million, there are six million land mines dug into its earth, which kill or maim 100 people a week. There are 3.6 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran, and another one million or so internal refugees, hungry and homeless, who roam the country hoping to survive another day. It has suffered three consecutive years of drought, and the combined effects of war, misrule and drought has meant that until only a few days ago the U.N. World Food Programme was feeding three million Afghans in the countryside and some 300,000 in Kabul itself. Virtually the whole of that institutional infrastructure has now collapsed under the threat of a U.S. invasion, and those who are now deprived even of that meagre rations are facing imminent death even without the U.S. firing even a shot – just like the Iraqi children who die not of bullets but for lack of the food and medicine which the U.S.-imposed embargo denies them.

Afghanistan is in this state as a consequence of the anti-Communist, Islamised crusade that the U.S. cynically waged there before abandoning it to its own miseries. This is the

country that the mightiest empire in human history has now set out to subjugate with all its technological and financial might, but with little chance of success.

America cannot win but it shall not suffer either. The Afghans shall not be subjugated but they shall suffer and perhaps even a majority of them might perish or become homeless and get consigned to a subhuman existence. That is the asymmetry of power in our time: those who rule the universe shall not be victorious against the poorest and the most wretched of this earth; those who refuse subjugation shall be made to suffer miseries that no previous period in human history inflicted on the powerless. War shall be permanent because the war cannot end without justice and justice is what the U.S. has set out to deny, permanently. The war shall be globalised because in this period of globalisation there is a singular power whose task it is to guarantee regimes of injustice throughout the world. And much of this war shall be secret, like much of the movements of finance capital because finance capital is what this war serves and therefore imitates. Bush is right: this is truly "a task that has no end" – until someone rises to end it.

Will there be organised opposition to these imperial designs? That is still hard to tell. *Haaretz*, the Israeli newspaper, mentions a poll taken in 30 countries in which only the U.S. and Israel are shown to be the countries where majorities are in favour of war: three-fourths in Israel, an overwhelmingly war-mongering society in any case, but only a bare majority in the U.S., with 54 per cent. Will even this majority in the U.S., with 54 per cent. Will even this majority hold once the immediate shock and grief have been absorbed and put in some perspective? Will the majority shrink or expand if Americans begin to die in obscure places? It is too soon to tell. What is already heartening is that there is great opposition to the type of military operations that involve large numbers of civilian deaths, and a student movement of anti-war activists is beginning to emerge on many campuses.

A brief word about this particular form of fighting which is called "terrorism". Bush was careful enough to say

at America's enemy was that particular "terrorism" which has global reach". In other words, he is not particularly concerned with the great many varieties, which include the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Ireland, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka, and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) fraternity in India.

Nor is "fundamentalism" the issue: Taliban fundamentalism is bad but Saudi fundamentalism is good, and Bush himself of course speaks the language of that Christian fundamentalism which defines the Far Right in contemporary U.S. "Terrorism with global reach," the designated enemy, is the one that challenges American power.

This is a complex and important subject. Briefly put, "terrorism" is what comes when the Communist Left and anti-colonial nationalism have both been defeated while the issue of imperialism remains unresolved and more important than ever. Capitalism takes the place of revolutionary ideology. Privatised, state violence takes the place of revolutionary warfare and national liberation struggles. Millenarian and freelance seekers of religious martyrdom replace the defeated phalanx of disciplined revolutionaries. Un-reason arises where Reason is appropriated by imperialism and is eliminated in its revolutionary form.

There were no Islamic terrorists in Afghanistan before the Americans created them as a counterweight against the secular Left. Islamism arose in Iran to fill that space which had been left vacant with the elimination of the secular, revolutionary Left by the CIA-sponsored regime of the Shah. Islamic secret societies arose in Egypt after imperialism and Zionism combined to defeat Gamal Abdel Nasser's secular nationalist project. The Hamas arose in Palestine because the cosmopolitan Palestinian nationalism was denied its dream of a secular state in the historic land of Palestine where Jew and Arab could live as equals. What is called "terrorism with global reach" today is a mirror of defeat but also the monster that imperialism's Faustian success made possible and which now haunts its own creator. The loss of over 6,000 lives in the blaze and collapse of the

World Trade Centre is the price the victims and the families paid for the victory of imperialism.

America can never defeat "terrorism with a global reach" because for all its barbarity and irrationality, religious motivated terrorism" is also a "sigh of the oppressed", and some Palestinians cheered it, that too was owed to the fact that even an "opiate of the people" is sometimes mistaken for the medicine itself. The only way to end this "terrorism" is to rebuild that revolutionary movement of the Left whose place it occupies and with whose mantle it masquerades.

Counter-Terror won't Work*

Praful Bidwai

NOTHING SINCE Hiroshima and Nagasaki has convulsed the world's conscience as powerfully as the butchery of innocent civilians in Tuesday's terror attacks in the US. However, the shock, agony and anger produced by these hastily, wholly unconscionable, acts are now giving way to calls for revenge and retribution in America, and to loose talk of a new global alliance for "freedom and democracy" against "jehadi terrorism" in India. American leaders insist on portraying these attacks as acts of "war". Many are deploying language reminiscent of Reagan's "Evil Empire", which would rationalise the unleashing of retribution with unlimited or maximum force in different parts of the world as America's self-defence".

Collin Powell has gone so far as to threaten large-scale and long-term retaliation against terrorism – whether "It is legally correct or not". And President Bush says he makes "no distinction" between "terrorists" and States that harbour them. Aengeful mindset has thus crystallised, which declares: if you're not with us, you're against us; we will pay the terrorists back in their own coin; force is the only language they understand...

Nothing could be more harmful than this mindset to the cause of democracy, freedom and pluralism – in the name of which the retribution is being threatened. Equally, nothing could more badly undermine the cause of a just, plural, multilaterally balanced, rule-of-law-based world order than unilateral military action by Washington, whether undertaken formally under NATO auspices or not. Such action seems imminent.

Yet, no power or State in the world is attempting to counsel restraint upon the US – neither the European Union nor Russia and China, nor even formerly strongly multilateralist States like India. The UN too has been passive. Ironically, the world or rather some more innocent civilians outside America's borders, could thus end up paying a high price through insensate violence and overwhelming use of force – just as New Yorkers tragically did.

The only way to prevent this is to immediately activate the Security Council and other multilateral instruments and mandate them to act in a way that balances the use of proportionate, moderate force under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, with a staunch defence of civil liberties. After the mess that NATO made – through its unilateral intervention – of the situation in the former Yugoslavia, especially Kosovo in 1999 there is a compelling reason for doing so. Yet, the prospect of this happening appears bleak.

Thus, we have the bizarre spectacle of a Cold War military alliance, which lost its very reason for existence a decade ago with the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, now invoking its “collective defence” Article 5 – for the first time in half a century! The US as the dominant partner of this far-from-democratic military coalition – there has always been one finger, not two, on NATO's triggers – seems all set to repeat the 1983 invasion of Libya, when Gaddafi and Co were branded “Mad Dogs” and then mercilessly bombarded. America today can target whomsoever it chooses – or rather, it all-too-fallible intelligence agencies suspect. This would be bad enough even if the US had a halfway respectable record of direct or sponsored external military intervention.

As it happens, that record is embarrassingly bad and profoundly undemocratic: from Iran and Central America in the Fifties, to Brazil, Cuba and Vietnam in the Sixties, to Chile, southern Africa, Nicaragua and El Salvador, and above all Afghanistan in the Seventies and Eighties – not to speak of Panama, Haiti and Angola, or the first Iran – Iraq war. In each case, America either snuffed out democratic or moderately nationalist regimes and sided with brutal dictators or

produced/strengthened new monsters while fighting old ones. These include Saddam Hussein (strengthened by the US tilt towards Iraq in the first Gulf War) and the Mujahideen in Afghanistan, who in turn produced Osama bin Laden and the Taliban. Bin Laden is in many ways an American creation.

Put simply, America, which believes in its own unique Manifest Destiny, has never learned to moderate its overwhelming military power and use it wisely to universal, democratic and just ends. Today, it has embarked on a purely militaristic Rambo-like strategy, based upon the national-security obsession characteristic of the Republican Right, to combat terrorists by "hunting them down". However, such a strategy is badly fraught. It will inevitably lead to severe curtailment of and attack on fundamental rights and people's freedoms. It will create a climate of suspicion, paranoia and nationalist hysteria: already, certain religious communities are being openly maligned, and Arab-Americans are receiving threatening calls. It will give respectability to intellectually bankrupt "theories" like the Clash of Civilisations, itself a pitiable attempt to invent a post-Cold War "enemy" for the US.

Above all, a militarist approach will fail to tackle the conditions and causes of terrorism itself. Force may be necessary to fight terrorism in the short run, but it alone cannot suffice. It can quickly become counter-productive. Sub-State terrorism arises from and is rooted in factors such as exclusion, discrimination, communalism, anomie and ethnic hatred, often compounded by brutalising poverty-enhancing, elitist economic policies. Unless these factors are addressed, terrorism cannot be sustainably combated. Militarism leads to State terrorism, which typically ends up aggravating sub-State terrorism, and is itself far worse than it. Israel – Palestine is a good, if horrifying case in point.

Those who are praying for a new Indo US anti-terrorist "strategic partnership" (with Israel thrown in) or for US "global leadership" against terrorism – and there are many in India – should therefore pause and think again. It is deplorable that the Vajpayee government has blinded itself by its Pakistan obsession to offer just such a partnership to the US. The

eventual costs of a direct US presence in the neighbourhood could prove truly onerous.

There are three other major lessons in the present episode, which has exposed the limits of US military might, as well as militarism. First, the skilfully executed aircraft attack in New York and Washington should put paid to any Missile Defence (MD) plans. Critics, who convincingly argue that ME cannot credibly meet the real security threats which the US faces, now stand vindicated. Howsoever sophisticated an ME shield might be, short-range missiles and aircraft can underfly it, and inexpensive decoys can fool it. "Absolute" security through MD is dangerously illusory.

The whole episode also puts a big question mark over the doctrine of deterrence – the idea that a rational evaluation of "unacceptable" retaliatory damage will prevent an adversary from attack. It is now plain that the world's largest nuclear arsenal cannot prevent or deter mass murder. Second, it is unwise to seek security principally through physical means and preventive barriers.

The air cover around many critical strategic structures (e.g. The Pentagon, the White House, etc.) will probably remain vulnerable to suicide-bomber aircraft. The world's 430 odd nuclear power reactors are each a potential Chernobyl which can be devastatingly triggered off by easily available conventional bombs. The current non-proliferation regime based on physical inspection of nuclear material movements, is highly unreliable.

A leaked international Atomic Energy Agency report shows that the world's plutonium reprocessing inventories annually include or exclude scores of kilos of "material unaccounted for" – the equivalent of several Pokharan-type bombs. Again, there are severe limits to how much you can tighten X-ray screening of hand baggage at airports: weapons made of ceramic, composite material or carbon fibre will pass unnoticed. Besides, high-rise buildings, airliners and huge amounts of combustible plastic are all part of normal urban architecture today.

Finally, we must reflect on the long-term causes of terrorism rooted in unbalanced, rootless, ruthless growth, cultural erosion, uprooting and destabilisation, social strife, ethnic exclusivism, chauvinist nationalism, and extreme centralisation of power. Only non-military social, economic and cultural policies can address these factors by promoting equitable, balanced, people-centred development, where human beings matter more than markets, and where comprehensive social security prevails over military preparedness.

The Algebra of Infinite Justice*

Arundhati Roy

In the aftermath of the unconscionable September 11 suicide attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre, an American newscaster said: Good and evil rarely manifest themselves as clearly as they did last Tuesday. People who we don't know massacred people who we do. And they did so with contemptuous glee.' Then he broke down and wept.

Here's the rub: America is at war against people it doesn't know, because they don't appear much on TV. Before it has properly identified or even begun to comprehend the nature of its enemy, the US government has, in a rush of publicity and embarrassing rhetoric, cobbled together an 'international coalition against terror', mobilized its army, its air force, its navy and its media, and committed them to battle.

The trouble is that once America goes off to war, it can't very well return without having fought one. If it doesn't find its enemy, for the sake of the enraged folks back home, it will have to manufacture one. Once war begins, it will develop a momentum, a logic and a justification of its own, and we'll lose sight of why it's being fought in the first place. What we're witnessing here is the spectacle of the world's most powerful country reaching reflexively, angrily, for an old instinct to fight a new kind of war. Suddenly, when it comes to defending itself, America's streamlined warships, cruise missiles and F-16 jets look like obsolete, lumbering things. As deterrence, its arsenal of unclear bombs is no longer worth its weight in scrap. Box-cutters, penknives, and cold anger are the weapons with which the wars of the new century will be waged. Anger is the lock pick. It slips through customs unnoticed. Doesn't show up in baggage checks.

* *The Guardian*, London, Sept. 29, 2001.

Who is America fighting? On September 20, the FF said that it had doubts about the identities of some of the hijackers. On the same day President George Bush said, 'We know exactly who these people are and which governments are supporting them.' It sounds as though the president knows something that the FBI and the American public don't.

In his September 20 address to the US Congress President Bush called the enemies of America 'enemies of freedom'. 'Americans are asking, why do they hate us?' He said. 'They hate our freedoms, our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other.' People are being asked to make two leaps of faith here. First, to assume that The Enemy is who the US government says it is, even though it has no substantial evidence to support that claim. And second, to assume that The Enemy's motives are what the US government says they are and there's nothing to support that either.

For strategic, military and economic reasons, it is vital for the US government to persuade its public that their commitment to freedom and democracy and the American Way of Life is under attack. In the current atmosphere of grief, outrage and anger, it's an easy notion to peddle. However, if that were true, it's reasonable to wonder why the symbols of America's economic and military dominance the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were chosen as the targets of the attacks. Why not the Statue of Liberty? Could it be that the stygian anger that led to the attacks has its taproot not in American freedom and democracy, but in the US government's record of commitment and support to exactly the opposite things to military and economic terrorism, insurgency, military dictatorship, religious bigotry and unimaginable genocide (outside America)? It must be hard for ordinary Americans, so recently bereaved, to look up at the world with their eyes full of tears and encounter what might appear to them to be indifference. It isn't indifference. It's just augury. An absence of surprise. The tired wisdom of knowing that what goes around eventually comes around. American people ought to know that it is not them but their government's policies that are

so hated. They can't possibly doubt that they themselves, their extraordinary musicians, their writers, their actors, their spectacular sportsmen and their cinema, are universally welcome. All of us have been moved by the courage and grace shown by fire-fighters, rescue workers and ordinary office staff in the days since the attacks.

America's grief at what happened has been immense and immensely public. It would be grotesque to expect it to calibrate or modulate its anguish. However, it will be a pity if, instead of using this as an opportunity to try to understand why September 11 happened, Americans use it as an opportunity to usurp the whole world's sorrow to mourn and avenge only their own. Because then it falls to the rest of us to ask the hard questions and say the harsh things. And for our pains, for our bad timing, we will be disliked, ignored and perhaps eventually silenced.

The world will probably never know what motivated those particular hijackers who flew planes into those particular American buildings. They were not glory boys. They left no suicide notes, no political messages; no organization has claimed credit for the attacks. All we know is that their belief in what they were doing outstripped the natural human instinct for survival, or any desire to be remembered. It's almost as though they could not scale down the enormity of their rage to anything smaller than their deeds. And what they did has blown a hole in the world, as we knew it. In the absence of information, politicians, political commentators and writers (like myself) will invest the act with their own politics, with their own interpretations. This speculation, this analysis of the political climate in which the attacks took place, can only be a good thing.

But war is looming large. Whatever remains to be said must be said quickly. Before America places itself at the helm of the international coalition against terror, before it invites (and coerces) countries to actively participate in its almost godlike mission called Operation Infinite Justice until it was pointed out that this could be seen as an insult to Muslims, who believe that only Allah can mete out infinite justice, and was

renamed Operation Enduring Freedom it would help if some small clarifications are made. For example, Infinite Justice/Enduring Freedom for whom? Is this America's war against terror in America or against terror in general? What exactly is being avenged here? Is it the tragic loss of almost 7,000 lives, the gutting of five millions square feet of office space in Manhattan, the destruction of a section of the Pentagon, loss of several hundreds of thousands of jobs, the bankruptcy of some airline companies and the dip in the New York Stock Exchange? Or is it more than that? In 1996, Madeleine Albright, then the US secretary of state, was asked on national television what she felt about the fact that 500,000 Iraqi children had died as a result of US economic sanctions. She replied that it was a very hard choice, but that, all things considered, we think the price is worth it. Albright never lost her job for saying this. She continued to travel the world representing the views and aspirations of the US government. More pertinently, the sanctions against Iraq remain in place. Children continue to die.

So here we have it. The equivocating distinction between civilization and savagery, between the massacre of innocent people or, if you like, a clash of civilizations and collateral damage. The sophistry and fastidious algebra of infinite justice. How many dead Iraqis will it take to make the world a better place? How many dead Afghans for every dead American? How many dead women and children for every dead man? How many dead Mujahedin for each dead investment banker? As we watch mesmerized, Operation Enduring Freedom unfolds on TV monitors across the world. A coalition of the world's superpowers is closing in on Afghanistan, one of the poorest, most ravaged, war-torn countries in the world, whose ruling Taliban government is sheltering Osama bin Laden, the man being held responsible for the September 11 attacks.

The only thing in Afghanistan that could possibly count as collateral value is its citizenry. (Among them, half a million maimed orphans. There are accounts of hobbling stampedes that occur when artificial limbs are airdropped into remote,

naccessible villages.) Afghanistan's economy is in a shambles. In fact, the problem for an invading army is that Afghanistan has no conventional coordinates or signposts to plot on a military map: no big cities, no highways, no industrial complexes, no water treatment plants.

Farms have been turned into mass graves. The countryside is littered with land mines. 10 million is the most recent estimate. The American army would first have to clear the mines and build roads in order to take its soldiers in.

Fearing an attack from America, one million citizens have fled from their homes and arrived at the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The UN estimates that there are eight million Afghan citizens who need emergency aid. As supplies run out, food and aid agencies have been asked to leave. The BBC reports that one of the worst humanitarian disasters of recent times has begun to unfold. Witness the infinite justice of the new century. Civilians are starving to death while they're waiting to be killed.

In America there has been rough talk of bombing Afghanistan back to the Stone Age. Someone please break the news that Afghanistan is already there. And if it's any consolation, America played no small part in helping it on its way. The American people may be a little fuzzy about where exactly Afghanistan is (we hear reports that there's a run on maps of the country), but the US government and Afghanistan are old friends.

In 1979, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the CIA and Pakistan's ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) launched the largest covert operation in the history of the CIA. Their purpose was to harness the energy of Afghan resistance to the Soviets and expand it into a holy war, an Islamic jihad, which would turn Muslim countries within the Soviet Union against the communist regime and eventually destabilize it. When it began, it was meant to be the Soviet Union's Vietnam. It turned out to be much more than that....

After all that has happened, can there be anything more ironic than Russia and America joining hands to destroy

Afghanistan? The question is, can you destroy destruction? Dropping more bombs on Afghanistan will only shuffle the rubble, scramble some old graves and disturb the dead.

The desolate landscape of Afghanistan was the burial ground of Soviet communism and the springboard of a unipolar world dominated by America. It made the space for neo-capitalism and corporate globalization, again dominated by America. And now Afghanistan is poised to become the graveyard for the unlikely soldiers who fought and won this war for America....

India, thanks in part to its geography, and in part to the vision of its former leaders, has so far been fortunate enough to be left out of this Great Game. Had it been drawn in, it's more than likely that our democracy, such as it is, would not have survived. Today, as some of us watch in horror, the Indian government is furiously gyrating its hips, begging the US to set up its base in India rather than Pakistan. Having had this ringside view of Pakistan's sordid fate, it isn't just odd, it's unthinkable, that India should want to do this. Any third world country with a fragile economy and a complex social base should know by now that to invite a superpower such as America in (whether it says it's staying or just passing through) would be like inviting a brick to drop through your windscreen.

Operation Enduring Freedom is ostensibly being fought to uphold the American Way of Life. It'll probably end up undermining it completely. It will spawn more anger and more terror across the world. For ordinary people in America, it will mean lives lived in a climate of sickening uncertainty: will my child be safe in school? There have been warnings about the possibility of biological warfare small pox, bubonic plague, anthrax the deadly pay load of innocuous crop-duster aircraft. Being picked off a few at a time may end up being worse than being annihilated all at once by a nuclear bomb.

The US government, and no doubt governments all over the world, will use the climate of war as an excuse to curtail civil liberties, deny free speech, lay off workers, harass ethnic and religious minorities, cut back on public spending and divert

nuge amounts of money to the defense industry. To what purpose? President Bush can no more rid the world of evildoers than he can stock it with saints. It's absurd for the US government to even toy with the notion that it can stamp out terrorism with more violence and oppression. Terrorism is the symptom, not the disease. Terrorism has no country. It's transnational, as global an enterprise as Coke or Pepsi or Nike. At the first sign of trouble, terrorists can pull up stakes and move their factories from country to country in search of a better deal. Just like the multi-nationals.

Terrorism as a phenomenon may never go away. But if it is to be contained, the first step is for America to at least acknowledge that it shares the planet with other nations, with other human beings who, even they are not on TV, have loves and grief and stories and songs and sorrows and, for heaven's sake, rights. Instead, when Donald Rumsfeld, the US defense secretary, was asked what he would call a victory in America's new war, he said that if he could convince the world that Americans must be allowed to continue with their way of life, he would consider it a victory.

The September 11 attacks were a monstrous calling card from a world gone horribly wrong. The message may have been written by Bin Laden (who knows?) and delivered by his couriers, but it could well have been signed by the ghosts of the victims of America's old wars. The millions killed in Korea, Vietnam and Cambodia, the 17,500 killed when Israel backed by the US invaded Lebanon in 1982, the 200,000 Iraqis killed in Operation Desert Storm, the thousands of Palestinians who have died fighting Israel's occupation of the West Bank. And the millions who died, in Yugoslavia, Somalia, Haiti, Chile, Nicaragua, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Panama, at the hands of all the terrorists, dictators and genocidists whom the American government supported, trained, bankrolled and supplied with arms. And this is far from being a comprehensive list.

For a country involved in so much warfare and conflict, the American people have been extremely fortunate. The strikes on September 11 were only the second on American soil

in over a century. The first was Pearl Harbor. The reprisal for this took a long route, but ended with Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This time the world waits with bated breath for the horrors to come.

Someone recently said that if Osama bin Laden didn't exist, America would have had to invent him. But, in a way America did invent him. He was among the jihadis who moved to Afghanistan in 1979 when the CIA commenced its operations there. Bin Laden has the distinction of being created by the CIA and wanted by the FBI. In the course of a fortnight he has been promoted from suspect to prime suspect and then, despite the lack of any real evidence, straight up the charts to being wanted dead or alive.

From all accounts, it will be impossible to produce evidence (of the sort that would stand scrutiny in a court of law) to link Bin Laden to the September 11 attacks. So far, it appears that the most incriminating piece of evidence against him is the fact that he has not condemned them.

From what is known about the location of Bin Laden and the living conditions in which he operates, it's entirely possible that he did not personally plan and carry out the attacks that he is the inspirational figure, the CEO of the holding company. The Taliban's response to US demands for the extradition of Bin Laden has been uncharacteristically reasonable: produce the evidence, then we'll hand him over. President Bush's response is that the demand is non-negotiable.

(While talks are on for the extradition of CEO can India put in a side request for the extradition of Warren Anderson of the US? He was the chairman of Union Carbide, responsible for the Bhopal gas leak that killed 16,000 people in 1984. We have collated the necessary evidence. It's all in the files. Could we have him, please?)

But who is Osama bin Laden really? Let me rephrase that. What is Osama bin Laden? He's America's family secret. He is the American president's dark doppelganger. The savage twin of all that purports to be beautiful and civilized. He has been sculpted from the spare rib of a world laid to waste by America's foreign policy: its gunboat diplomacy, its unclear

arsenal, its vulgarly stated policy of full-spectrum dominance, its chilling disregard for non-American lives, its barbarous military interventions, its support for despotic and dictatorial regimes, its merciless economic agenda that has munched through the economies of poor countries like a cloud of locusts. Its marauding multinationals that are taking over the air we breathe, the ground we stand on, the water we drink, the thoughts we think. Now that the family secret has been spilled, the twins are blurring into one another and gradually becoming interchangeable. Their guns, bombs, money and drugs have been going around in the loop for a while. (The Stinger missiles that will greet US helicopters were supplied by the CIA. The heroin used by America's drug addicts comes from Afghanistan. The Bush administration recently gave Afghanistan a \$43m subsidy for a war on drugs....)

Now Bush and Bin Laden have even begun to borrow each other's rhetoric. Each refers to the other as the head of the snake. Both invoke God and use the loose millenarian currency of good and evil as their terms of reference. Both are engaged in unequivocal political crimes. Both are dangerously armed one with the nuclear arsenal of the obscenely powerful, the other with the incandescent destructive power of the utterly hopeless. The fireball and the ice pick. The bludgeon and the axe. The important thing to keep in mind is that neither is an acceptable alternative to the other.

President Bush's ultimatum to the people of the world 'if you're not with us, you're against us' is a piece of presumptuous arrogance. It's not a choice that people want to, need to, or should have to make.

The Abyss of the Future*

Noam Chomsky

The September 11 atrocities are commonly described as an event of historic significance. That is true, though not in scale; rather, in the direction the guns are pointing. For the first time in modern history, Europe and its offshoots are the targets, not the perpetrators, of horrifying crimes. Europeans have spent centuries slaughtering each other, but have not been attacked by their traditional victims. The U.S. and other world leaders have emphasised that confronting the terrorist threat is not a short-term task. We should therefore consider carefully the measures that can be taken to mitigate what has been called, in high places, "the evil scourge of terrorism", a plague spread by "depraved opponents of civilisation itself" in "a return to barbarism in the modern age"; and also the actions that might spread the plague.

We should begin, surely, by identifying the plague and the depraved elements that have been returning the world to barbarism. The curse is not new. The phrases I just quoted are from President Ronald Reagan and his Secretary of State George Shultz. The Reagan administration came to office 20 years ago proclaiming that the struggle against international terrorism will be the core of U.S. foreign policy. They responded by organising campaigns of international terrorism of unprecedented scale and violence, even leading to a World Court condemnation of the U.S. for "unlawful use of force" and a Security Council resolution calling on all states to observe international law (vetoed by the U.S.). The World Court order to terminate the crime of international terrorism and pay substantial reparations was dismissed with contempt. The instant reaction was to escalate the terrorist war, including

* *The Hindu*, Nov. 5, 2001.

official orders to the mercenary army to avoid combat and attack undefended civilian targets.

I mentioned this case only because it is uncontroversial given the judgments of the highest international authorities. But it is far from the most extreme example. In the Reagan year alone, U.S.-sponsored state terrorists in Central America left hundreds of thousands of tortured and mutilated corpses, millions of maimed and orphaned, and four countries in ruins. In the same years, Western-backed South African depredation killed 1.5 million people. I need not speak of West Asia, or much else.

All of this, however, is barred from the annals of terrorism, by a simple device; the term "terrorism," like most terms of political discourse, has two meanings, a literal one and a propagandistic one. The literal meaning can be found in official U.S. documents, which instruct us that terrorism is "the calculated use of violence or threat of violence to attain goals that are political, religious, or ideological in nature (carried out through intimidation, coercion, or instilling fear." But the literal definition cannot be used, for one reason, because it is a close paraphrase of official government policy, called "low intensity" war or "counter-terrorism." Another reason is that the definition quickly yields conclusions that are wholly unacceptable, such as those I mentioned, a tiny sample. Accordingly, the propagandistic version is preferred: terrorism is terrorism that is directed against the U.S. and its friends and allies. Reviews of the literature, including scholarship, reveal not surprisingly, that this usage is close to universal, and of course not restricted to the U.S.

There is a great deal more to say about terrorism, in both the literal and propagandistic sense. But the threat of terrorism is not the only abyss into which we peer. An ever greater threat is posed by expansion of the arms race into space: the term 'race' is inappropriate, because the U.S. is, for now competing alone. The plans for militarisation of space are disguised as "ballistic missile defense" (BMD), only a small component of what is planned. It is well understood that BMD even if technically feasible, must rely on satellite

communication, and destroying satellites is far easier than shooting down missiles. That is one reason why the U.S. must seek "full spectrum dominance" such overwhelming control of space that even the poor man's weapons will not be available to an adversary. And that requires offensive space-based capacities.

The need for total dominance will increase as a result of the "globalisation of the economy," the U.S. Space Command explains. The reason is that "globalisation" is expected to bring about "a widening between 'haves' and 'have-nots', an assessment shared by U.S. intelligence. Planners are concerned that the widening divide may lead to unrest among the have-nots, which the U.S. must be ready to control by "using space systems and planning for precision strike from space" as a "counter to the worldwide proliferation of BMD" by unruly elements – a predictable consequence of the recommended programmes, just as the "widening divide" is an anticipated consequence of the preferred form of "globalisation."

Throughout history it has been recognised that such steps are dangerous. By now the danger has reached the level of a threat to human survival. But it is rational to proceed nonetheless, on the assumptions of the prevailing value system, which are deeply rooted in existing institutions.

To move to another domain, the Bush administration has been widely criticised for undermining the Kyoto Treaty on grounds that to conform would harm the U.S. economy. The criticisms are surprising, because their decision is entirely rational within the framework of existing ideology. We are instructed daily to have faith in neoclassical markets, in which isolated individuals are rational wealth-maximisers. The market responds perfectly to their "votes", expressed in currency inputs. The value of their interests is measured the same way. The threats to survival are currently being enhanced by dedicated efforts to weaken the institutional structures that have been developed to mitigate the consequences of market fundamentalism, and even more important, to undermine the culture of sympathy and solidarity that sustains these institutions.

I would certainly not want to suggest that the prospects are uniformly bleak. Far from it. One very promising development is the slow evolution of a human rights culture among the general population, a tendency that accelerated from the 1960s, when the popular ferment had a notable civilising effect in many domains. One significant feature has been a greatly heightened concern for civil and human rights, including rights of minorities, women and future generations – the driving force of the environmental movement that became a significant force in the following years.

An optimist might hold, perhaps realistically, that history reveals a deepening of appreciation for human rights, as well as broadening of their range; not without sharp reversals, but the general tendency seems real.

(Excerpts from the Fifth D. T. Lakdawala Memorial Lecture organised by the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi).

Chomsky's Counter-Charge*

Noam Chomsky

Recently in New Delhi, as part of a four-city lecture tour which drew large crowds, Chomsky spoke to Akshaya Mukul and Bharat Dogra.

You have been criticising the American action in Afghanistan. What alternative do you suggest?

The best alternative to slaughter is to stop slaughter. What the US is doing has no conceivable justification. The US should have come up with evidence, found the perpetrators of the September 11 attack, and brought them to justice. Not what is being done. If an Irish Republican Army bomb goes off in London, should Ireland be bombed? Every crime has a background. The US should pay attention to the background of September 11 instead of carrying out terrorism in Afghanistan, leading to death of thousands of Afghans. Instead, the US should have followed the Taliban offer of talks and asked for Osama bin Laden.

Could you elaborate on what you describe as 'US terrorism'?

I believe the powerful states indulge in terrorism more often than smaller nations do. The US leads the pack. It is the only country which has been criticised by the International Court of Justice for carrying out terrorism in Nicaragua. The entire country had to suffer, thousands died and the economy went for a complete toss because of US bombing. Nicaragua went to the international court, which gave a verdict in its favour. But the US dismissed the decision and intensified attacks on Nicaragua. The democratic values of the US are also revealed by the fact that it refuses to extradite Emmanuel Constant despite desperate requests by the Haitian government. The US is afraid of what he might reveal.

* *The Times of India*, Nov. 12, 2001.

Who gave birth to these so-called Islamic terrorist organisations. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) with the help of friendly countries nurtured them for decades, used them to the US advantage. The US was not willing to listen to any objection as long as these outfits helped its cause. So much so that one of the accused in the 1993 terrorist attack – an Egyptian cleric now in a US jail – came to the country at the behest of the CIA. Immigration authorities had objected to his entry. Now suddenly all hell is breaking loose.

Even the support the US is getting now from powerful states is not without double standards. US supporters want to justify their own terrorism. The UK follows the US reflexively. Russia wants US approval of its actions in Chechnya, China wants US support for the massacre of Muslims in western China. India and Pakistan are vying for US attention because of Kashmir and a terrorist state like Algeria thinks supporting the US will give it a certain standing among other nations.

Do you think India can become an integral part of the club of nations supporting what you call US terrorism?

A lot that India does never gets reported in the media. The top human rights groups for years have been writing about the atrocities committed by Indian armed forces in Kashmir and other parts. India has also been responsible for setting up terrorist groups, training them. Little is heard about it. In Afghanistan, it has been supporting the Northern Alliance, right now considered the votary of democracy. But this alliance of warlords had killed and raped thousands in the early '90s. Their period was one of the worst Afghanistan ever saw. Little wonder the Taliban were welcomed by people. India never talked about it, neither did your media. In many respects, India is like Russia and Britain.

In the present situation, what should be the initiative of the peace movement?

It all depends on when the bombing stops, which is a matter of choice by the US, not prediction. If and when bombing stops, the US should be asked to get out of Afghanistan and peace activists and organisations like the Food

and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Oxfam, and the Red Cross should work towards solving the impending food disaster. According to *The New York Times* the number of people facing starvation in Afghanistan has increased by about 50 per cent from 5 million to 7.5 million. The FAO recently said that due to the bombing, 80 per cent of planting of crops could not be done. The US is doing it consciously. It is a crime.

Is the US peace movement taking note of what the government is doing?

The peace movement in the US is now more strong and rooted. Unlike the '60s, nobody says he is part of the peace movement but a strong network has developed. It might not show in the media, because I firmly believe that mass media is closely linked to the state. They are economic units selling products to the market. But peace activists are working. More than 2,000 people came to hear me in Boston, showed their concern, asked serious questions. The majority were in favour of peace and against the US action. The danger to the peace movement comes when the state steals its language and cause.

Please elaborate?

An example will suffice. During the Reagan regime, there was a strong movement in favour of a nuclear freeze. Once Reagan understood its importance, he patronised the movement, stole its language and initiated his 'Star Wars' programme. His argument was simple: 75 percent of Americans want a nuclear freeze so others should follow. A similar exercise is being conducted now in the name of saving democracy and providing justice. In this respect, I feel popular movements are mixed stories.

Do you think the United Nations (UN) has completely failed Afghanistan?

As long as the US disregards the UN, nothing can be done, no problem can be solved. The US is like a mafia head. Had it wanted, it could have easily passed a resolution in the Security Council. But it wants to perpetrate terror, show to the world that it is the leader of the world.

How far has the mainstream media succeeded in manufacturing a consensus in favour of US actions?

Well, the attempt is certainly being made to manufacture consensus. Even the Left, liberal press is not writing about voices of dissent. So you have a confused citizenry – ignorant of basic facts like civilians being killed in Afghanistan, the state of hunger and impending disaster. They don't know what to believe.

I will give you another example. During the Serbian crisis, the American press, even those considered liberal, supported the US action. We have to do it because of what Serbians did in Bosnia was the argument. By that logic even Washington should be bombed.

'Brutality smeared in peanut butter'

Why America Must Stop the War Now

Arundhati Roy

As darkness deepened over Afghanistan on Sunday, October 7, 2001, the US government, backed by the International Coalition Against Terror (the new, amenable surrogate for the United Nations), launched air strikes against Afghanistan. TV channels lingered on computer-animated images of cruise missiles, stealth bombers, tomahawks, "bunker-busting" missiles and Mark 82 high drag bombs. All over the world, little boys watched goggle-eyed and stopped clamouring for new video games. The UN, reduced now to an ineffective acronym, wasn't even asked to mandate the air strikes. (As Madeleine Albright once said, "We will behave multilaterally when we can, and unilaterally when we must.") The "evidence" against the terrorists was shared amongst friends in the "coalition". After conferring, they announced that it didn't matter whether or not the "evidence" would stand up in a court of law. Thus, in an instant, were centuries of jurisprudence carelessly trashed. Nothing can excuse or justify an act of terrorism, whether it is committed by religious fundamentalists, private militia, people's resistance movements – or whether it's dressed up as a war of retribution by a recognised government. The bombing of Afghanistan is not revenge for New York and Washington. It is yet another act of terror against the people of the world. Each innocent person that is killed must be added to, not set off against, the grisly toll of civilians who died in New York and Washington. People rarely win wars, governments rarely lose them. People get killed. Governments moult and regroup, hydra-headed. They use flags first to shrink-wrap people's minds and smother thought, and then as ceremonial shrouds to bury their willing dead. On both sides, in Afghanistan as well as America, civilians are now hostage to

the actions of their own governments. Unknowingly, ordinary people in both countries share a common bond – they have to live with the phenomenon of blind, unpredictable terror. Each batch of bombs that is dropped on Afghanistan is matched by a corresponding escalation of mass hysteria in America about anthrax, more hijackings and other terrorist acts. There is no easy way out of the spiralling morass of terror and brutality that confronts the world today. It is time now for the human race to hold still, to delve into its wells of collective wisdom, both ancient and modern. What happened on September 11 changed the world forever. Freedom, progress, wealth, technology, war – these words have taken on new meaning. Governments have to acknowledge this transformation, and approach their new tasks with a modicum of honesty and humility. Unfortunately, up to now, there has been no sign of any introspection from the leaders of the International Coalition. Or the Taliban. When he announced the air strikes, President George Bush said: “We’re a peaceful nation.” America’s favourite ambassador, Tony Blair (who also holds the portfolio of prime minister of the UK) echoed him: “We’re a peaceful people.” So now we know. Pigs are horses. Girls are boys. War is peace. Speaking at the FBI headquarters a few days later, President Bush said: “This is our calling. This is the calling of the United States of America. The most free nation in the world. A nation built on fundamental values that reject hate, reject violence, rejects murderers and rejects evil. We will not tire.” Here is a list of the countries that America has been at war with – and bombed – since the second world war: China (1945–46, 1950–53), Korea (1950–53), Guatemala (1954, 1967–69), Indonesia (1958), Cuba (1959–60), the Belgian Congo (1964), Peru (1965), Laos (1964–73), Vietnam (1961–73), Cambodia (1969–70), Grenada (1983), Libya (1986), El-Salvador (1980s), Nicaragua (1980s), Panama (1989), Iraq (1991–99), Bosnia (1995), Sudan (1998), Yugoslavia (1999). And now Afghanistan. Certainly it does not tire – this, the most free nation in the world. What freedoms does it uphold? Within its borders, the freedoms of speech, religion, thought; of artistic expression, food habits, sexual preferences (well, to some extent) and many other exemplary,

wonderful things. Outside its borders, the freedom to dominate, humiliate and subjugate usually in the service of America's real religion, the "free market". So when the US government christens a war "Operation Infinite Justice", or "Operation Enduring Freedom", we in the third world feel more, than a tremor of fear. Because we know that Infinite Justice for some means Infinite Injustice for others. And Enduring Freedom for some means Enduring Subjugation for others. The International Coalition Against Terror is a largely cabal of the richest countries in the world. Between them, they manufacture and sell almost all of the world's weapons; they possess the largest stockpile of weapons of mass destruction – chemical, biological and nuclear. They have fought the most wars, account for most of the genocide, subjection, ethnic cleansing and human rights violations in modern history, and have sponsored, armed and financed untold numbers of dictators and despots. Between them, they have worshipped, almost deified, the cult of violence and war. For all its appalling sins, the Taliban just isn't in the same league.

The Taliban was compounded in the crumbling crucible of rubble, heroin and landmines in the backwash of the cold war. Its oldest leaders are in their early 40s. Many of them are disfigured and handicapped, missing an eye, an arm or a leg. They grew up in a society scarred and devastated by war. Between the Soviet Union and America, over 20 years, about \$45bn (£30bn) worth of arms and ammunition was poured into Afghanistan. The latest weaponry was the only shard of modernity to intrude upon a thoroughly medieval society. Young boys many of them orphans – who grew up in those times – had guns for toys, never knew the security and comfort of family life, never experienced the company of women. Now, as adults and rulers, the Taliban beat, stone, rape and brutalise women. They don't seem to know what else to do with them. Years of war had stripped them of gentleness, inured them to kindness and human compassion. Now they've turned their monstrosity on their own people. They dance to the percussive rhythms of bombs raining down around them.

All due respect to President Bush, the people of the world do not have to choose between the Taliban and the US government. All the beauty of human civilisation – our art, our music, our literature – lies beyond these two fundamentalist ideological poles. There is as little chance that the people of the world can all become middle-class consumers, as there is that they will all embrace any one particular religion. The issue is not about good vs. evil or Islam vs. Christianity as much as it is about space. About how to accommodate diversity, how to contain the impulse towards hegemony every kind of hegemony, economic, military, linguistic, religious and cultural. Any ecologist will tell you how dangerous and fragile a monoculture is. A hegemonic world is like having a government without a healthy opposition. It becomes a kind of dictatorship. It's like putting a plastic bag over the world, and preventing it from breathing. Eventually, it will be torn open....

But in an enterprise as cynical as this one, it seems to matter hardly at all. Love is hate, north is south, peace is war. Among the global powers, there is talk of "putting in a representative government". Or, on the other hand, of "restoring" the kingdom to Afghanistan's 89-year-old former king Zahir Shah, who has lived in exile in Rome since 1973. That's the way the game goes – support Saddam Hussein, then "take him out"; finance the mojahedin, then bomb them to smithereens; put in Zahir Shah and see if he's going to be a good boy. (Is it possible to "put in" a representative government? Can you place an order for democracy – with extra cheese and jalapeno peppers?) Reports have begun to trickle in about civilian casualties, about cities emptying out as Afghan civilians flock to the borders which have been closed. Main arterial roads have been blown up or sealed off. Those who have experience of working in Afghanistan say that by early November, food convoys will not be able to reach the millions of Afghans (7.5m, according to the UN) who run the very real risk of starving to death during the course of this winter. ...

Rudi Guiliani, Mayor of New York City, returned a gift of \$10m from a Saudi prince because it came with a few words of friendly advice about American policy in the Middle East. Is pride a luxury that only the rich are entitled to? Far from stamping it out, igniting this kind of rage is what creates terrorism. Hate and retribution don't go back into the box once you've let them out. For every "terrorist" or his "supporter" that is killed, hundreds of innocent people are being killed too. And for every hundred innocent people killed, there is a good chance that several future terrorists will be created. Where will it all lead? Setting aside the rhetoric for a moment, consider the fact that the world has not yet found an acceptable definition of what "terrorism" is. One country's terrorist is too often another's freedom fighter. At the heart of the matter lies the world's deep-seated ambivalence towards violence. Once violence is accepted as a legitimate political instrument, then the morality and political acceptability of terrorists (insurgents or freedom fighters) becomes contentious....

It is important for governments and politicians to understand that manipulating these huge, raging human feelings for their own narrow purposes may yield instant results, but eventually and inexorably, they have disastrous consequences. Igniting and exploiting religious sentiments for reasons of political expediency is the most dangerous legacy that governments or politicians can bequeath to any people – including their own. People who live in societies ravaged by religious or communal bigotry know that every religious text – from the Bible to the Bhagwad Gita – can be mined and misinterpreted to justify anything, from nuclear war to genocide to corporate globalisation. This is not to suggest that the terrorists who perpetrated the outrage on September 11 should not be hunted down and brought to book. They must be. But is war the best way to track them down? Will burning the haystack find you the needle? Or will it escalate the anger and make the world a living hell for all of us? At the end of the day, how many people can you spy on, how many bank accounts can you freeze, how many conversations can you eavesdrop on, how

many e-mails can you intercept, how many letters can you open, how many phones can you tap? Even before September 11, the CIA had accumulated more information than is humanly possible to process. (Sometimes, too much data can actually hinder intelligence – small wonder the US spy satellite completely missed the preparation that preceded India's nuclear test in 1998.) The sheer scale of the surveillance will become logistical, ethical and civil rights nightmare. It will drive everybody clean crazy. And freedom – that precious, precious thing -- will be the first casualty. It's already hurt and haemorrhaging dangerously. Governments across the world are cynically using the prevailing paranoia to promote their own interests. All kinds of unpredictable political forces are being unleashed. In India, for instance, members of the All India People's Resistance Forum, who were distributing anti-war and anti-US pamphlets in Delhi, have been jailed. Even the print of the leaflets was arrested. The rightwing government (while sheltering Hindu extremists groups such as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the Bajrang Dal) has banned the Islamic Student Movement of India and is trying to revive an anti-terrorist Act which had been withdrawn after the Human Rights Commission reported that it had been more abused than used. Millions of Indian citizens are Muslim. Can anything be gained by alienating them? Every day that the war goes on, raging emotions are being let loose into the world. The international press has little or no independent access to the war zone. In any case, mainstream media, particularly in the US, have more or less rolled over, allowing themselves to be tickled on the stomach with press handouts from military men and government officials. Afghan radio stations have been destroyed by the bombing. The Taliban has always been deeply suspicious of the press. In the propaganda war, there is no accurate estimate of how many people have been killed, or how much destruction has taken place. In the absence of reliable information, wild rumours spread. Put your ear to the ground in this part of the world, and you can hear the thrumming, the deadly drumbeat of burgeoning anger. Please stop the war now. Enough people have died. The smart missiles are just not sma

enough. They're blowing up whole warehouses of suppressed fury. President George Bush recently boasted, "When I take action, I'm not going to fire a \$2m missile at a \$10 empty tent and hit a camel in the butt. It's going to be decisive." President Bush should know that there are no targets in Afghanistan that will give his missiles their money's worth. Perhaps, if only to balance his books, he should develop some cheaper missiles to use on cheaper targets and cheaper lives in the poor countries of the world. But then, that may not make good business sense to the coalition's weapons manufacturers. It wouldn't make any sense at all, for example, to the Carlyle Group – described by the Industry Standard as "the world's largest private equity firm", with \$13bn under management. Carlyle invests in the defence sector and makes its money from military conflicts and weapons spending. Carlyle is run by men with impeccable credentials.

Who Says It's Not a War on Islam?

Abid Ullah Jan

It is painful to watch old news-reels of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini making speeches and crowds cheering. Mussolini's posturing seems so transparent that one wonders how adults could have taken him seriously. With Hitler, what comes across is crude, passionate intensity and the rapture of his audiences, sharing his feelings, with minds turned off. What is chilling is knowing how many tens of millions of human beings lost their lives because of these almost musical-comedy performances. The seemingly shallow stuff can have deep roots as well as deep consequences. Few things today are more shallow than the reasons most people have for supporting Bush and Blair war on "terrorism" and accepting their claims that it is not a war on Islam.

To understand if it is a war on Islam, we need to honestly and impartially scan the horizon since 1990.

Execution of Past Judgments

Apart from the massive air strikes, commando raids and a prolonged "dirty war" against Islamic movements, the police repression, deportation, torture, censorship and death squads that we are certainly going to face are certainly not planned after the September 11 attacks. The US "war on terror" is no more than translation to the physical level, of the systematic approach that started with (1) introduction of the rancid notion of "Islamic fundamentalism"; (2) classification of Islam; (3) equating "fundamentalism" with extremism and then terrorism; (4) removal of governments, like Mr. Erbakan's in Turkey, for having affiliations with Islam; (5) support of governments' cracking down on "Islamic extremists" such as Egyptian and Algerian regimes; (6) development of agendas for governments like Musharraf's; (7) initially supporting the Taliban and then demonising them to show the world the failure of Islam. The

coming physical horror is simply execution of the judgments passed by the western intellectuals upon Islam in the past decade or so.

Just have a look at how the ground has been prepared for the coming "dirty war." Musharraf came to "moderate" religious schools and take Jihad related Qur'anic verses from school curricula in 2001. However, the *Economist* sensed "The Islamic Threat" way back in its March 13, 1993 edition whereby it declared: "It is the mightiest power in the Levant... Governments tremble before it. Arabs everywhere turn to it for salvation from their various miseries. This power is not Egypt, Iraq, or indeed any nation, but the humble mosque." Mosques would probably be the next targets after dealing with madrasas. Similarly, since the establishment of Israel, no one had talked about "fundamentalism," yet Yitzhak Rabin suddenly started calling the world in December 1992, "to devote its attention to the greater danger inherent in Islamic fundamentalism. [W]e stand on the line of fire against the danger of fundamentalist Islam."

A Slip of Tongue

Mr. Bush with a slip of tongue tells his mind in 2001 by describing the US recent missions in the lands of Islam as "crusade." Peter Rodman, senior editor of the *National Review*, however, saw in 1992 that the West being challenged from the outside by a "militant, atavistic force driven by a hatred of all Western political thought, harking back to age-old grievances against Christendom... the rage against us is too great..." (May 11, 1992).

Charles Krauthammer summed up the expected resistance by the Islamic civilization to the hegemonic designs of the US in one word: "Global Intifadah" (*Washington Post*, January 1, 1993). He tried to suggest that the world is now "facing a mood and a movement... a perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judaeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both." *The New York Times* went one step ahead and confirmed on January 21, 1996: "The Red Menace Is Gone.

But Here's Islam." The open war against it, however, had to be delayed until a perfect excuse like the September 11 attacks.

Intellectuals like Samuel P. Huntington played a key role in making Islam an enemy of choice. He declared: "Islam is the only civilisation which has put the survival of the West in doubt." Web page of the Montclair State University in New Jersey reads: "The West today is losing irretrievably its former global hegemony and is increasingly challenged economically and culturally by East Asian and Islamic civilizations." Irving Kristol, Council on Foreign Relations, wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* editorial, August 2, 1996: "With the end of the Cold War, what we really need is an obvious ideological and threatening enemy, one worthy of our mettle, one that can unite us in opposition."

Bernard Lewis in his influential essay, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," writes: "Islamic fundamentalism has given an aim and a form to the otherwise aimless and formless resentment and anger of the Muslim masses" (*Atlantic*, September 1999). Islamic "fundamentalism," according to Amos Perlmutter (*Insight in the News*, February 15, 1993), is "a plague" which has infected the entire Islamic world and whose goal is to topple secularist military regimes in Egypt, Syria and Algeria and replace them with [unacceptable] Islamic states."

Un)holy Alliance

Daily Express, ran an article "Islam Is a Creed of Cruelty" on January 16, 1995, which concluded that the spectre of Islamic fundamentalism was haunting Europe and the world powers should enter into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre. The underlying assumption has always been that Islam is primitive, underdeveloped, retrograde, at best stuck in the memory hole of a medieval splendour out of which it could not disentangle itself without a radical transformation; and this could only be based on Western, "rational", "progressive" values. The long proposed "holy alliance" is now in making.

Above mentioned examples show that during the past 1 – 12 years systematic efforts have been directed to relegate

Islam from its holistic perspective, encompassing all facets of human conduct and behaviour to a mere set of rituals something what the west has done to Christianity itself. According to Lt-Col Trinko of US Army, "[Muslim] must work to fashion the Shari'ah into a modern blueprint for change." In a similar vein, one of the CIA experts counselled that those Muslims who do not believe that word of God is law, should be found and supported. "The Arab rulers," he thinks, "have to create a new identity of [Muslim] seductively fusing Islam and the West."

This so-called expert added: "Though the Saudi ruler may be guilty of ugly authoritarian behaviour and consistent stupidity in foreign affairs, they are at least fervent hypocrites and that [in] Middle East Affairs, a fervent hypocrite is always safer than a fervent puritan." He had the audacity to make such humiliating remarks because there was truth in it.

General Policy Guidelines

These are in fact general policy guidelines that we see in operation during lifting of democracy related sanctions against Pakistan and visit of the British Prime Minister who could not bear an undemocratic government in Pakistan at any cost.

Over the last decade the western propaganda successfully divided Muslims into "Moderates," "Liberals" and "Fundamentalists" for whom there is no basis or justification in Islam. There has been no definition offered even in the Western propaganda. Salman Rushdie, however, lists in his October article in *Washington Post* what he believes fundamentalists are against: "homosexuals, pluralism, secularism, short skirt dancing, evolution theory, sex." He believes such "fundamentalists are tyrants, not Muslims... yes, even the short skirts and dancing – are worth dying for." He further argues, "kissing in public places, bacon sandwiches, cutting-edge fashion, movie music, freedom of thought, beauty, love," should matter as "these will be our weapons." The moderates among us should decide for themselves as to what kind of Islam allows kissing in public places, bacon sandwiches, homosexuality, etc.

Besides mass propaganda, efforts were underway to support regimes like Husaini Mubarak's for their crackdown on Islamic opposition and remove elected governments like Erbakan's for exactly the same reasons for which the US wants to support religious groups in China. With false propaganda, the Taliban have been demonised to the extent that even the majority of Muslims who have never set a foot on the Afghan soil to verify the grand lies, speak in the anti-Taliban, CNNised language. The US has established that a country can never be ruled with Islamic principles. Now the war is only left to be carried out by individual Muslim countries by collecting information on its citizens as to who is involved with the banned religious parties, who is the extremist, how to arrest and try the fundamentalism and if necessary remove them from the scene.

An Undeclared War on Islam

Apart from the above-mentioned factors, the US, UK recent moves are part of an undeclared war on Islam because:

1. Jonathan Steele, Ewen Mac Askill, Richard Norton-Taylor and Ed Harriman reported on September 22, 2001 in *The Guardian* that attacks on Afghanistan were planned before September 11. The US planned the attacks as soon as it considered it's demonizing the Taliban project as complete.
2. Islam is the only challenge to American hegemony with its claims to be a complete code of life with panacea for ills in economic, political, moral and spiritual systems, and thus only Islam can pose a threat to the civilization considered superior by the West.
3. The West reasons that the source of terrorism is not its terrorism but Islamic teachings and history. Naturally, the real campaign is against the teachings of Islam from the original sources at Madrasa.
Mustafa Kamal destroyed Islamic teachings 85 years ago in Turkey and dried up the swamp. We however are expected to follow suit sooner than later.
4. The US is planning to impose its brand of democracy or autocracy – whichever may be suitable – on Muslim countries by force. The US put forward many symbolic

personalities over the years to undermine the roots of Islam. These advocates preach unconditional assimilation into, support of, sympathy toward, and whole-hearted participation in the social and political system espoused by the US.

5. Transmissions of BBC and CNN testify to the fact that it is a war on Islam. On their part they put forward unqualified individuals or groups as representatives of Islam who may be unethical, deviants, or outright heretics from the religion with no subjective measures being used to ascertain the qualifications of such people. Rushdie's recent article in the *Washington Post* is an excellent example. They present Islamic Shariah as antiquated, irrelevant, authoritarian, unsophisticated, and limited.
6. By making public statements like: Taliban are not the real Muslims, the American leaders, like Karl Inderfurth, have long been creating a nationalistic or ethnic view and approach to Islam, or more accurately, creating a new religion that cannot truly be called Islam but rather has some outward aspects of it. It will certainly be one that would not pose a challenge to the US domination or offer anything that will make Islam seen as a viable alternative to the US unipolar world.
7. The evidence suggests that it is that US government that has been playing a leading role in the media crusade against Islam. As early as fall 1994, PBS aired a documentary by journalist Steve Emerson titled "Jihad in America." Evidence within the programme suggests that Emerson has access to official government intelligence. Some clips appear to be from home videos confiscated from Muslims in FBI sweeps. A decade of this kind of programming has set the climate for a war on Islam.

The facts do not change with the denials of Bush and Blair. The strength of Islam lies in the fact that despite having far less military and economic power, the western war-makers do not have the courage to declare it an open war on Islam. They would certainly fail as long as they want to cover their ulterior motives and undermine Islam under the guise of looking for "infinite Justice." Ending terrorism through eradicating its root causes may not take more than a few months. However, defeating Islam may cost them many generations before finally realising that it was a wrong war.

(*Radiance*, New Delhi)

A Hornet's Nest

Rajiv Dhavan

AMERICA'S WAR is a threat to world peace – no less to America itself. Between the bomb blasts of September 11 and the merciless bombing of Afghanistan from October 7, the U.S. evolved many strategies. The initial response was simply outrage and preparedness to fight. But sensing the danger of taking on the Muslim world en bloc, a dual diplomatic strategy was evolved to gather together the NATO and other allies and split the unity of the Muslim countries. The OPEC Muslim countries needed the U.S. to protect their oil trade. Egypt, Syria and Jordan depended on the U.S. to resolve the Palestine peace process. Division among the Muslim nations produced an uneasy status quo. Pakistan's policy of supporting the U.S. without breaching faith with the Taliban is dangerously uncertain. What made the diplomatic initiative viable was that before October 7 America had toned down its strategy to a manhunt of Osama bin Laden rather than bombing Afghanistan. From October 7 there was a distinct switch of strategy which will have uneasy consequences for many years.

America's Afghan War is not a just war. The concept of a 'just war' is writ large over the Mahabharata, but traceable in modern times to Grotius' celebrated *De Jure belli ac Pacis* (1625). But words are words; and practice gobbles up the meaning of words. Imperial practice has always twisted the meaning of a just war to suit its convenience. So far, the U.S. has not declared 'war'. So, on paper there is no war going on. The U.S. and Europe have always had their own view of a legitimate reprisal. A legitimate reprisal is what any powerful nation wants it to be. In 1827, Britain, France and the U.S. blockaded Turkey. In 1850, Britain threatened Greece in the Don Pacific incident because an English Jewish citizen's house was burnt. Greece was subjected to superpower blockades in

1886 and 1897 to establish the 'peace of the region'. America's celebrated Monroe Doctrine arrogated to itself the privilege of interfering in defence of both North and South America. In 1856, the Latin jurist Calvo protested that the Monroe Doctrine was neither good policy nor law. But, these protests made little difference. In 1854, the U.S. bombarded Greytown in Nicaragua because the American President felt it was a 'practical resort of outlaws'. This is precisely what is being argued now against the Taliban in Afghanistan. In 1858, the U.S. fleet entered the River Plate in Paraguay as part of gunboat diplomacy. In 1895, the British occupied the port areas of Nicaragua as part of a diplomatic terrorism. In a striking parallel to our present situation, in 1914 a part of Mexico was occupied because of threats to U.S. officers and seamen. The U.S. Congress Resolution of April 22, 1914, resembles the 2001 declarations on Afghanistan. Pronouncing that the U.S. had no hostility to the Mexican people, the U.S. President was authorised to "enforce his demand for unequivocal amends for certain affronts and indignities committed against the United States".

In 1923, Italy occupied Corfu, Greece in a celebrated incident over the murder of some Italian officers. In 1931, Japan invaded Manchuria; and China in 1937, without declaring war. In 1941, the U.S. suffered an attack on Pearl Harbour. From 1954, one of the ghastliest wars began in Vietnam because it was seen as a 'communist' threat to the free world. The U.S. has never hesitated to organize army insurrections in various parts of the world. The International Court of Justice rightly condemned the U.S. armed support against the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua in 1986.

In 1992, Iraq, was bombed to protect Kuwait. From 1998, Yugoslavia was bombarded. Aerial bombing is a renewed strategy of the U.S. — having its origins in Hiroshima and Vietnam. It is difficult to accept that all these were just wars; or that the scale and form of intervention were justified. The refusal of America's request for Osama bin Laden without adequate proof or extradition procedure cannot occasion a large scale attack on the Afghan nation. No doubt, American law

ermits bringing in criminals by fair means or foul -- as self-evident from the judgment in the Alvarez Machin case of 1992. But, this crosses all legal limits.

America's Afghan War is directed towards terrorism. But, is it the U.S. place to launch such an attack on a faraway region that must face the inevitable consequences rather than the U.S. There are too many unforgivable ironies in this. America creates refugees by bombing; and, then, sends food and supplies to the refugees it has created. Tough about immigration and with a harsh refugee policy, America would not have tolerated such an influx on its shores. Mixed into the rhetoric against Afghanistan are the alleged horrors of the Taliban as non-freedom loving Muslim fundamentalists. This has its own anti-Islamic cutting edge. Thus, despite its more sober protests and diplomacy to rally round some of the countries of the Muslim world, Anglo-American propaganda in its own subtle and unsubtle ways is itself fundamentalist.

This war will leave behind distinct religious undertones. It is impossible to argue that this war will not precipitate religious ill feeling on an unparalleled scale which portends ill for the future. America's jihad against terrorism has identified its real enemies. Provoked they will fight back. This is not to give support to Samuel Huntington's thesis of "the clash between (religious) civilisations".

This powerful thesis identifies religious fault lines which will erupt into religious wars between nations. Such fundamentalist wars are neither inherent nor inevitable. But, they can be drummed up. Indeed, one analysis of fundamentalism (be it Hindu, Christian or Muslim) is that it is politically contrived by ambitious people who will pawn away their lives to achieve power and notoriety. If fundamentalism can be manipulatively contrived in towns, cities and countries, it can also be exacerbated internationally.

America has started a war that it cannot control. Afghanistan itself will be torn apart. Already divided, the divisions will deepen into instability for many years to come. If America feels it can create a captive puppet Afghan regime, it

is mistaken. Nor can it be vouchsafed that Pakistan and the surrounding nations will escape the aftermath.

But, the street sense that this is a world war is misleading. A world war occurs when the nations fighting each other are evenly matched and willing to fight till victory. This was so with the World Wars of the Twentieth Century – as also Vietnam where North Vietnam was supported by powerful communist superpowers. The Afghan War has no such dimensions – with or without the reluctant oil-rich Arab nations. But, even though not a world war, America's Afghan War will have worldwide dimensions.

Terrorism will not stop, but increase in size and varieties. It is not just that air travel will not be the same or that civic centres will be bombed by terrorist groups. We have already seen a new round of 'terrorism' in the spread of the anthrax disease through the mail box. Where will all this end? America may have targeted Afghanistan, but it has also targeted itself. Americans will not be able to sleep easily for many years to come. They will never be able to reassure themselves that they will not be targets or victims wherever they go – in or out of America.

America's Afghan War is not to counter terrorism, but an act of unjust reprisal against the Afghan people. Afghanistan will be devastated, but it is the American people who will find themselves vulnerable in ways that defy protection. America's war is a threat to world peace and its own people. Effective peaceful methods to fight terrorism need to be devised. To adapt Brecht's phrase: "we who fight for kindness, must ourselves be both wise and kind".

(The Hindu, Oct. 19, 2001.)

US Planned War in Afghanistan Long Before September 11

Patrick Martin

Insider accounts published in the British, French and Indian media have revealed that US officials threatened war against Afghanistan during the summer of 2001. These reports include the prediction, made in July, that "if the military action went ahead, it would take place before the snows started falling in Afghanistan, by the middle of October at the latest." The Bush administration began its bombing strikes on the hapless, poverty-stricken country October 7, and ground attacks by US Special Forces began October 19.

It is not an accident that these revelations have appeared overseas, rather than in the US. The ruling classes in these countries have their own economic and political interests to look after, which do not coincide, and in some cases directly clash, with the drive by the American ruling elite to seize control of oil-rich territory in Central Asia.

The American media has conducted a systematic cover-up of the real economic and strategic interests that underlie the war against Afghanistan, in order to sustain the pretence that the war emerged overnight, full-blown, in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11.

The pundits for the American television networks and major daily newspapers celebrate the rapid military defeat of the Taliban regime as an unexpected stroke of good fortune. They distract public attention from the conclusion that any serious observer would be compelled to draw from the events of the past two weeks: that the speedy victory of the US-backed forces reveals careful planning and preparation by the American military, which must have begun well before the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

The official American myth is that "everything changed" on the day four airliners were hijacked and nearly 5,000 people murdered. The US military intervention in Afghanistan, by this account, was hastily improvised in less than a month. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, in a television interview November 18, actually claimed that only three weeks went into planning the military onslaught.

This is only one of countless lies emanating from the Pentagon and White House about the war against Afghanistan. The truth is that the US intervention was planned in detail and carefully prepared long before the terrorist attacks provided the pretext for setting it in motion. If history had skipped over September 11, and the events of that day had never happened, it is very likely that the United States would have gone to war in Afghanistan anyway, and on much the same schedule.

Afghanistan and the scramble for oil

The United States ruling elite has been contemplating war in Central Asia for at least a decade. As long ago as 1991, following the defeat of Iraq in the Persian Gulf War, Newsweek magazine published an article headlined "Operation steppe Shield?" It reported that the US military was preparing an operation in Kazakhstan modelled on the Operation Desert Shield deployment in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq.

If the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union provided the opportunity for the projection of American power into Central Asia, the discovery of vast oil and gas reserves provided the incentive. While the Caspian Sea coast of Azerbaijan (Baku) has been an oil production center for a century, it was only in the past decade that huge new reserves were discovered in the northwest Caspian (Kazakhstan) and in Turkmenistan, near the southwest Caspian.

American oil companies have acquired rights to as much as 75 percent of the output of these new fields, and US government officials have hailed the Caspian and Central Asia as a potential alternative to dependence on oil from the unstable Persian Gulf region. American troops have followed in the wake of these contracts. US Special Forces began joint

operations with Kazakhstan in 1997 and with Uzbekistan a year later, training for intervention especially in the mountainous southern region that includes Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and northern Afghanistan.

The major problem in exploiting the energy riches of Central Asia is how to get the oil and gas from the landlocked region to the world market. US officials have opposed using either the Russian pipeline system or the easiest available land route, across Iran to the Persian Gulf. Instead, over the past decade, US oil companies and government officials have explored a series of alternative pipeline routes – west through Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey to the Mediterranean; east through Kazakhstan and China to the Pacific; and most relevant to the current crisis, south from Turkmenistan across western Afghanistan and Pakistan to the Indian Ocean.

The Afghanistan pipeline route was pushed by the US-based Unocal oil company, which engaged in intensive negotiations with the Taliban regime. These talks, however, ended in disarray in 1998, as US relations with Afghanistan were inflamed by the bombing of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, for which Osama bin Laden was held responsible. In August 1998, the Clinton administration launched cruise missile attacks on alleged bin Laden training camps in eastern Afghanistan. The US government demanded that the Taliban hand over bin Laden and imposed economic sanctions. The pipeline talks languished.

Subverting the Taliban

Throughout 1999 the US pressure on Afghanistan increased. On February 3 of that year, Assistant Secretary of State Karl E. Inderfurth and State Department counter-terrorism chief Michael Sheehan travelled to Islamabad, Pakistan, to meet the Taliban's deputy foreign minister, Abdul Jalil. They warned him that the US would hold the government of Afghanistan responsible for any further terrorist acts by bin Laden.

According to a report in the Washington Post (October 3, 2001), the Clinton administration and Nawaz Sharif, then

prime minister of Pakistan, agreed on a joint covert operation to kill Osama bin Laden in 1999. The US would supply satellite intelligence, air support and financing, while Pakistan supplied the Pushtun-speaking operatives who would penetrate southern Afghanistan and carry out the actual killing.

The Pakistani commando team was up and running and ready to strike by October 1999, the Post reported. One former official told the newspaper, "It was an enterprise. It was proceeding." Clinton aides were delighted at the prospect of a successful assassination, with one declaring, "It was like Christmas."

The attack was aborted on October 12, 1999, when Sharif was overthrown in a military coup by General Pervez Musharraf, who halted the proposed covert operation. The Clinton administration had to settle for a UN Security Council resolution that demanded the Taliban turn over bin Laden to "appropriate authorities," but did not require he be handed over to the United States.

McFarlane and Abdul Haq

US subversion against the Taliban continued in 2000, according to an account published November 2 in the Wall Street Journal, written by Robert McFarlane, former national security adviser in the Reagan administration. McFarlane was hired by two wealthy Chicago commodity speculators, Joseph and James Ritchie, to assist them in recruiting and organizing anti-Taliban guerrillas among Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Their principal Afghan contact was Abdul Haq, the former mujahedin leader who was executed by the Taliban last month after an unsuccessful attempt to spark a revolt in his home province.

McFarlane held meetings with Abdul Haq and other former mujahedin in the course of the fall and winter of 2000. After the Bush administration took office, McFarlane parlayed his Republican connections into a series of meetings with State Department, Pentagon and even White House officials. All encouraged the preparation of an anti-Taliban military campaign.

During the summer, long before the United States launched airstrikes on the Taliban, James Ritchie travelled to Tajikistan with Abdul Haq and Peter Tomsen, who had been the US special envoy to the Afghan opposition during the first Bush administration. There they met with Ahmed Shah Massoud, the leader of the Northern Alliance, with the goal of coordinating their Pakistan-based attacks with the only military force still offering resistance to the Taliban.

Finally, According to McFarlane, Abdul Haq "decided in mid-August to go ahead and launch operations in Afghanistan. He returned to Peshawar, Pakistan, to make final preparations." In other words, this phase of the anti-Taliban war was under way well before September 11.

While the Ritchies have been portrayed in the American media as freelance operators motivated by emotional ties to Afghanistan, a country they lived in briefly while their father worked as a civil engineer in the 1950s, at least one report suggests a link to the oil pipeline discussions with the Taliban. In 1998 James Ritchie visited Afghanistan to discuss with the Taliban a plan to sponsor small business there. He was accompanied by an official from Delta Oil of Saudi Arabia, which was seeking to build a gas pipeline across Afghanistan in partnership with an Argentine firm.

1. CIA secret war

McFarlane's revelations come in the course of a bitter diatribe against the CIA for "betraying" Abdul Haq, failing to back his operations in Afghanistan, and leaving him to die at the hands of the Taliban. The CIA evidently regarded both McFarlane and Abdul Haq as less than reliable – and it had its own secret war going on in the same region, the southern half of Afghanistan where the population is predominantly Pushtun-speaking.

According to a front-page article in the Washington Post November 18, the CIA has been mounting paramilitary operations in southern Afghanistan since 1997. The article carries the byline of Bob Woodward, the Post writer made

famous by Watergate, who is a frequent conduit for leaks from top-level military and intelligence officials.

Woodward provided details about the CIA's role in the current military conflict, which includes the deployment of a secret paramilitary unit, the Special Activities Division. The force began combat on September 27, using both operatives on the ground and Predator surveillance drones equipped with missiles that could be launched by remote control.

The Special Activities Division, Woodward reports, "consists of teams of about half a dozen men who do not wear military uniforms. The division has about 150 fighters, pilots and specialists, and is made up mostly of hardened veterans who have retired from the US military.

"For the last 18 months, the CIA has been working with tribes and warlords in southern Afghanistan, and the division units have helped create a significant new network in the region of the Taliban's greatest strength."

This means that the US spy agency was engaged in attacks against the Afghan regime – what under other circumstances the American government would call terrorism – from the spring of 2000, more than a year before the suicide hijackings that destroyed the World Trade Center and damaged the Pentagon.

War plans take shape

With the installation of George Bush in the White House, the focus of American policy in Afghanistan shifted from a limited incursion to kill or capture bin Laden to preparing a more robust military intervention directed at the Taliban regime as a whole.

The British-based Jane's International Security reports from March 15, 2001 that the new American administration was working with India, Iran and Russia "in a concerted effort against Afghanistan's Taliban regime." India was supplying the Northern Alliance with military equipment, advisers and helicopter technicians, the magazine said, and both India and Russia were using bases in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan for the operations.

The magazine added: "Several recent meetings between the newly instituted Indo-US and Indo-Russian joint working groups on terrorism led to this effort to tactically and strategically counter the Taliban. Intelligence sources in Delhi said that while India, Russia and Iran were leading the anti-Taliban campaign on the ground, Washington was giving the Northern Alliance information and logistic support."

On May 23, the White House announced the appointment of Zalmay Khalizad to a position on the National Security Council as special assistant to the president and senior director for Gulf, Southwest Asia and Other Regional Issues. Khalizad is a former official in the Reagan and the first Bush administrations. After leaving the government, he went to work for Unocal.

On June 26 of this year, the magazine IndiaReacts reported more details of the cooperative efforts of the US, India, Russia and Iran against the Taliban regime. "India and Iran will 'facilitate' US and Russian plans for 'limited military action' against the Taliban if the contemplated tough new economic sanctions don't bend Afghanistan's fundamentalist regime," the magazine said.

At this stage of military planning, the US and Russia were to supply direct military assistance to the Northern Alliance, working through Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, in order to roll back the Taliban lines toward the city of Mazar-e-Sharif in a scenario strikingly similar to what actually took place over the past two weeks. An unnamed third country supplied the Northern Alliance with anti-tank rockets that had already been used to use against the Taliban in early June.

"Diplomats say that the anti-Taliban move followed a meeting between US Secretary of State Collin Powell and Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and later between Powell and Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh in Washington," the magazine added. "Russia, Iran and India have also held a series of discussions and more diplomatic activity is expected."

Unlike the current campaign, the original plan involved the use of military forces from both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, as well as Russian itself, IndiaReacts said that in early June

Russian President Vladimir Putin told a meeting of the Confederation of Independent States, which includes many of the former Soviet republics, that military action against the Taliban was in the offing. One effect of September 11 was to create the conditions for the United States to intervene on its own, without any direct participation by the military forces of the Soviet successor states, and thus claim an undisputed American right to dictate the shape of a settlement in Afghanistan.

The US threatens war – before September 11

In the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, two reports appeared in the British media indicating that the US government had threatened military action against Afghanistan several months before September 11.

The BBC's George Arney reported September 18 that American officials had told former Pakistani Foreign Secretary Niaz Naik in mid-July of plans for military action against the Taliban regime:

"Mr. Naik said US officials told him of the plan at a UN-sponsored international contact group on Afghanistan which took place in Berlin.

"Mr. Naik told the BBC that at the meeting the US representatives told him that unless Bin Laden was handed over swiftly America would take military action to kill or capture both Bin Laden and the Taliban leader, Mullah Omar.

"The wider objective, according to Mr. Naik, would be to topple the Taliban regime and install a transitional government of moderate Afghans in its place – possibly under the leadership of the former Afghan King Zahir Shah.

"Mr. Naik was told that Washington would launch its operation from bases in Tajikistan, where American advisers were already in place.

"He was told that Uzbekistan would also participate in the operation and that 17,000 Russian troops were on standby.

"Mr. Naik was told that if the military action went ahead it would take place before the snows started falling in Afghanistan, by the middle of October at the latest."

Four days later, on September 22, the Guardian newspaper confirmed this account. The warnings to Afghanistan came out of a four-day meeting of senior US, Russian, Iranian and Pakistani officials at a hotel in Berlin in mid-July, the third in a series of back-channel conferences dubbed "brainstorming on Afghanistan."

The participants included Naik, together with three Pakistani generals; former Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations Saeed Rajai Khorassani; Abdullah Abdullah, foreign minister of the Northern Alliance; Nikolai Kozyrev, former Russian special envoy to Afghanistan, and several other Russian officials; and three Americans: Tom Simos, a former US ambassador to Pakistan; Karl Inderfurth, a former assistant secretary of state for south Asian affairs; and Lee Coldren, who headed the office of Pakistan, Afghan and Bangladesh affairs in the State Department until 1997.

The meeting was convened by Francesc Vendrell, then and now the chief UN representative for Afghanistan. While the nominal purpose of the conference was to discuss the possible outline of a political settlement in Afghanistan, the Taliban refused to attend. The Americans discussed the shift in policy toward Afghanistan from Clinton to Bush, and strongly suggested that military action was an option.

While all three American former officials denied making any specific threats, Coldren told the Guardian, "there was some discussion of the fact that the United States was so disgusted with the Taliban that they might be considering some military action." Naik, however, cited one American declaring that action against bin Laden was imminent: "This time they were very sure. They had all the intelligence and would not miss him this time. It would be aerial action, maybe helicopter gunships, and not only overt, but from very close proximity to Afghanistan."

The Guardian summarized: "The threats of war unless the Taliban surrendered Osama bin Laden were passed to the

regime in Afghanistan by the Pakistani government, senior diplomatic sources revealed yesterday. The Taliban refused to comply but the serious nature of what they were told raises the possibility that Bin Laden, far from launching the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon out of the blue 10 days ago, was launching a preemptive strike in response to what he saw as US threats."

Bush, oil and Taliban

Further light on secret contacts between the Bush administration and the Taliban regime is shed by a book released November 15 in France, entitled *Bin Laden, the Forbidden Truth*, written by Jean-Charles Brisard and Guillaume Dasquie. Brisard is a former French secret service agent, author of a previous report on bin Laden's Al Qaeda network, and former director of strategy for the French corporation Vivendi, while Dasquie is an investigative journalist.

The two French authors write that the Bush administration was willing to accept the Taliban regime, despite the charges of sponsoring terrorism, if it cooperated with plans for the development of the oil resources of Central Asia.

Until August, they claim, the US government saw the Taliban "as a source of stability in Central Asia that would enable the construction of an oil pipeline across Central Asia." It was only when the Taliban refused to accept US conditions that "this rationale of energy security changed into a military one."

By way of corroboration, one should note the curious fact that neither the Clinton administration nor the Bush administration ever placed Afghanistan on the official State Department list of states charged with sponsoring terrorism, despite the acknowledged presence of Osama bin Laden as a guest of the Taliban regime. Such a designation would have made it impossible for an American oil or construction company to sign a deal with Kabul for a pipeline to the Central Asian oil and gas fields.

Talks between the Bush administration and the Taliban began in February 2001, shortly after Bush's inauguration. A

Taliban emissary arrived in Washington in March with presents for the new chief executive, including an expensive Afghan carpet. But the talks themselves were less than cordial. Brisard said, "At one moment during the negotiations, the US representatives told the Taliban, 'either you accept our offer of a carpet of gold, or we bury you under a carpet of bombs'."

As long as the possibility of a pipeline deal remained, the White House stalled any further investigation into the activities of Osama bin Laden, Brisard and Dasquie write. They report that John O'Neill, deputy director of the FBI, resigned in July in protest over this obstruction. O'Neill told them in an interview, "the main obstacles to investigate Islamic terrorism were US oil corporate interests and the role played by Saudi Arabia in it." In a strange coincidence, O'Neill accepted a position as security chief of the World Trade Center after leaving the FBI, and was killed on September 11.

Confirming Niaz Naik's account of the secret Berlin meeting, the two French authors add that there was open discussion of the need for the Taliban to facilitate a pipeline from Kazakhstan in order to insure US and international recognition. The increasingly acrimonious US – Taliban talks were broken off August 2, after a final meeting between US envoy Christina Rocca and a Taliban representative in Islamabad. Two months later the United States was bombing Kabul.

The politics of provocation

This account of the preparations for war against Afghanistan brings us to September 11 itself. The terrorist attack that destroyed the World Trade Center and damaged the Pentagon was an important link in the chain of causality that produced the US attack on Afghanistan. The US government had planned the war well in advance, but the shock of September 11 made it politically feasible, by stupefying public opinion at home and giving Washington essential leverage on reluctant allies abroad.

Both the American public and dozens of foreign governments were stampeded into supporting military action against Afghanistan, in the name of the fight against terrorism.

The Bush administration targeted Kabul without presenting any evidence that either bin Laden or the Taliban regime was responsible for the World Trade Center atrocity. It seized on September 11 as the occasion for advancing longstanding ambitions to assert American power in Central Asia.

There is no reason to think that September 11 was merely a fortuitous occurrence. Every other detail of the war in Afghanistan was carefully prepared. It is unlikely that the American government left to chance the question of providing a suitable pretext for military action.

In the immediate aftermath of September 11, there were press reports – again, largely overseas – that US intelligence agencies had received specific warnings about large-scale terrorist attacks, including the use of hijacked airplanes. It is quite possible that a decision was made at the highest levels of the American state to allow such an attack to proceed, perhaps without imagining the actual scale of the damage, in order to provide the necessary spark for war in Afghanistan.

How otherwise to explain such well-established facts as the decision of top officials at the FBI to block an investigation into Zaccarias Massaoui, the Franco-Moroccan immigrant who came under suspicion after he allegedly sought training from a US flight school on how to steer a commercial airliner, but not to take off or land?

The Minneapolis field office had Massaoui arrested in early August, and asked FBI headquarters for permission to conduct further inquiries, including a search of the hard drive of his computer. The FBI tops refused, on the grounds that there was insufficient evidence of criminal intent on Massaoui's part – an astonishing decision for an agency not known for its tenderness on the subject of civil liberties.

This is not to say that the American government deliberately planned every detail of the terrorist attacks or anticipated that nearly 5,000 people would be killed. But the least likely explanation of September 11 is the official one: that dozens of Islamic fundamentalists, many with known ties to Osama bin Laden, were able to carry out a wide-ranging conspiracy on three continents, targeting the most prominent symbols of American power, without any US intelligence agency having the slightest idea of what they were doing.

(Net News, Dec. 2001.)

None Jailed Appears Linked to Attacks!

*Josh Meyer
and Eric Lichtblau*

Washington: Nine weeks after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, federal authorities said Thursday that they have found no evidence indicating that any of the roughly 1,200 people arrested in the United States played a role in the suicide hijacking plot.

The FBI has conducted an exhaustive investigation into whether the 19 suspected hijackers were part of an organized underground of "sleeper" terrorist cells operating within the United States. While investigators continue to look for evidence of such a broad-based conspiracy, so far they have found none, according to several law enforcement officials.

In particular, said one senior law enforcement official, "no links have been established" between the hijackers and the four men believed to be the strongest terrorism suspects: two men from India arrested Sept. 12 on a train in Texas, a former Boston cabdriver arrested outside Chicago and a former flight school student who was arrested in Minnesota in August. Some authorities emphasize the possibility that investigators, whose efforts have been frustrated by uncooperative witnesses, might still uncover evidence linking the jailed suspects to the plots or other terrorist or criminal activities.

But others maintain that if such evidence existed, the exhaustive investigation by more than 4,000 federal agents would have found it.

Agents here and abroad have compared the whereabouts of the suspects and the alleged hijackers, scrutinized all of their bank, credit card, Internet and phone records, and even tracked them back to their hometowns in a search for links, authorities say.

The criminal investigation into the attacks, the largest in U.S. history, has netted about 1,200 detainees, and as many as half of them may still be behind bars on immigration violation or unrelated local, state or federal charges. But with these four central men all but eliminated as potential co-conspirators, the Justice Department has failed to build a case against a single prime U.S. suspect in the terrorist attacks, authorities concede.

Atty. Gen. John Ashcroft has emphasized that the key goal of the investigation is the prevention of other attacks. And authorities say, though they have provided no evidence, that arrests may have thwarted other terrorist plots. Meantime investigators still are collecting bits of information on the hijackers and suspects arrested in the U.S. They have discovered, for instance, that the alleged hijacker who piloted the plane that crashed into a Pennsylvania field had been stopped for speeding in Maryland just two days before the hijacking.

But major domestic leads appear to have dried up. As a result, authorities say, they have shifted nearly all of their attention and resources overseas in the continuing hunt for co-conspirators and suspected terrorists.

Nevertheless, investigators remain highly interested in the "mysterious circumstances" surrounding the four central men, the senior law enforcement official said.

Four Central Suspects Undergo Much Scrutiny

The Indian men, Ayub Ali Khan and Mohammed Jaweed Azmath, were apprehended on an Amtrak train while possessing box cutters. Nabil al-Marabh, the onetime cabdriver, was connected to a suspected member of Osama bin Laden's terrorist network and had recently received a Michigan permit to haul hazardous waste, setting off a review of hazardous material drivers.

And the computer of Zacarias Moussaoui, the French Algerian man in Minnesota, contained references to crop dusting and chemical dispersal.

"They act suspicious and you don't know why," said one official involved with the investigation. "It sends flags up."

But, the official said, "to date there are no connections. We're still looking, and the matter is still under investigation. You don't know what will happen in the future, but nothing yet." Authorities now say they have turned their focus to the dozens of suspects who have been detained in Europe since Sept. 11 and to captured or defected Taliban soldiers in Afghanistan.

U.S. investigators remain convinced that Bin Laden and his top aides orchestrated and financed the hijackings. But they have struggled to determine who may have worked directly with the 19 suspected hijackers and who acted as liaisons with Bin Laden and his Al Qaeda organization in Afghanistan.

"The major investigative activity is coming outside the United States," a government official familiar with the investigation said Thursday. "Most of the main accomplices are located outside the United States."

Worldwide Manhunt Continues for Fugitives

Hundreds of FBI agents have fanned out across Germany, other European countries and the Middle East, working with authorities there in a search for clues, connections and potential suspects.

A number of suspects have been apprehended in Europe, and three fugitives from Hamburg, Germany – including a man who the FBI believes was meant to be the 20th hijacker – are being sought on international arrest warrants.

Another prime suspect is Mustafa Ahmad, who authorities believe is a close Bin Laden associate who may have funnelled as much as \$500,000 in Al Qaeda money to the hijackers' training and living expenses.

And Lotfi Raissi, an Algerian being held in London on a U.S. extradition warrant, is a pilot who British authorities say trained at least four of the hijackers to fly.

Heil Herman, a former FBI counter-terrorism expert who supervised the investigation into the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and has maintained contacts with bureau investigators, said the overseas investigation could prove crucial in helping authorities determine the broad outlines of

the hijacking plot. It could also help shed light on whether the suspects still being held in the United States played some as-yet-unestablished role, particularly if suspects caught overseas begin to cooperate, Herman said.

"I think the investigation is somewhat at a crossroads, but a positive crossroads," Herman said. Investigators "are developing a great deal of intelligence on these [terrorist] cells, particularly in Europe, and the better intelligence becomes as time goes on in Afghanistan, the more cooperators we'll get.

"A lot of [the U.S. suspects] are not cooperating and talking at all, but that will change in time, as long as [authorities] continue to make significant arrests in Spain, in Germany, in London and elsewhere. It's a matter of time before people begin to cooperate, and from there, the house of cards will fall."

Robert Blitzer, the FBI's former chief of counter-terrorism, was less optimistic in his assessment. He said the U.S.-held suspects have been investigated so thoroughly by now that agents most certainly would have found any terrorist connections.

"It's just not panning out the way they thought," said Blitzer, who has spoken with investigators about the case. "I definitely think it's disappointing. But I have to take it on face value that they've run out all the leads on these guys and have come up cold."

"I'm sure they've investigated these guys back to the day they were born: records checks, interviews with everybody that knew them, going back to old neighborhoods and co-workers." Blitzer said FBI agents have been sent back to the home countries of detainees to conduct investigations there, particularly of the four central suspects.

"I'm certain it has been intensive," Blitzer said. "On anything related to this case, they're obviously going to pull out all the stops and run down anything to gather information, to see who these guys are."

The FBI's investigation has been hampered by the recent anthrax outbreak, which diverted hundreds of agents from the case any by the fact that none of the alleged attackers survived.

"The unfortunate thing is that a lot of the people involved in this are dead - 19 of them," one government official said.

And investigators' inability to get any of the prime suspects to talk has proved so frustrating that some observers outside the government have suggested the U.S. should consider torture as a means of ensuring cooperation. U.S. authorities say they are not pursuing that option.

All four of the prime suspects are being held as material witnesses. They have not been charged with any crimes in connection with the attacks.

Khan and Azmath, two Indian natives who had been living in New Jersey, were arrested in Fort Worth on Sept. 12. They had boarded an Amtrak train when their cross-country flight from Newark, N.J., to San Antonio was grounded in St. Louis just after the hijackings.

Authorities said they found box cutters, more than \$4,000 in cash and hair dye on the two men, who initially drew the suspicion of police when they paid cash for their train tickets.

Authorities' suspicion increased when it appeared that at least one of the men had wired large amounts of cash back to India despite earning relatively meagre wages as the manager of a magazine stand at a train depot.

Al-Marabh, a Kuwaiti-born man who had worked in Boston as a cabdriver, was arrested on an unrelated warrant outside Chicago. Authorities said he was associated with Raed Hijazi, a suspected Bin Laden Operative who is imprisoned in Jordan in connection with a terrorist plot aimed at killing American tourists there.

Moussaoui, the fourth prime suspect, first aroused suspicion when he reportedly told flight instructors in Minnesota that he only wanted to learn how to fly a plane, not to take off or land. They called authorities and he was detained in August on immigration charges.

Suspicion of Moussaoui intensified after it was learned that French authorities had put him on a watch list of Islamic extremist groups. He was suspected of being the missing 20th hijacker because he had been taken into custody before the plot was carried out. U.S. authorities believe 20 men were meant to

participate, in part because three of the planes carried five alleged hijackers while there were only four hijackers on United Airlines Flight 93, which crashed in Pennsylvania.

But on Wednesday, FBI Director Robert Mueller said Moussaoui actually told flight school officials just the opposite of what had been reported — that he only wanted to learn to take off and land commercial jets, not fly them. Mueller said the FBI no longer considered Moussaoui to be the 20th hijacker.

Even with Muller's assertion, authorities say they will continue to investigate Moussaoui and the others still being held in custody. "We're just hopeful to get at the truth," one official said.

(*Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 16, 2001.)

Avoid Osama's Trap

Bernard Haykel

The War America is engaged in after the attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and Pennsylvania is a war for the hearts and minds of average Muslims around the world. Osama bin Laden, if indeed he is the mastermind behind the attacks, has set a trap for the United States into which it must not fall.

By attacking the U.S. as part of a jihad, Osama bin Laden is in fact claiming to Muslims to represent their grievances and to represent real Islam. He is saying: Muslims, I share your grievances and unlike your corrupt and authoritarian governments I am the only one doing something about it. I have destroyed the symbols of American capitalism and stopped the heartbeat of world finance which the U.S. dominates.

The U.S., as well as moderate Muslims the world over, must unite and deny him this symbolic victory and must not accept to engage him in combat on these terms. As a professor of Islamic law I have researched the law of jihad and can state unequivocally that the combat Osama bin Laden has engaged us in cannot be labeled a jihad.

Furthermore, I believe a strong case can be made that he has acted contrary to the tenets of Islam and can be ostracised from the community of believing Muslims. Moderate Muslims will agree with me, certainly, as they are horrified by this attack and are desperate to have it disassociated from their religion. The West must provide moderate Muslims a way out of Osama bin Laden's trap.

According to Islamic law there are at least six reasons why Osama bin Laden's barbaric violence cannot fall under the rubric of jihad: 1) individuals and organisations cannot declare a jihad, only states can; 2) One cannot kill innocent women and children when conducting a jihad; 3) One cannot kill Muslims in a jihad; 4) One cannot fight a jihad against a country in

which Muslims can freely practice their religion and proselytize Islam; 5) Prominent Muslim jurists around the world have condemned these attacks and their condemnation forms a juristic consensus (*ijma'*) against Osama bin Laden's actions. This consensus renders his actions un-Islamic; 6) The welfare and interest of the Muslim community (*maslaha*) is being harmed by Osama bin Laden's actions and this equally makes them un-Islamic.

Americans have been baffled by reports that Muslims do not like the U.S., and even hate their country. Muslims do not hate America. As proof of this we have: seven million Muslims living in the U.S.; foreign Muslims, like many others around the world, clamor to obtain U.S. immigration visas; Muslims consume American products and emulate American fashions (intellectuals, social and sartorial); Muslims place the bulk of their money in U.S. financial institutions; the list goes on and on.

What many Muslims undeniably resent about America, however, are American foreign policies towards Iraq, Iran, Israel/Palestine and a complicit polity of supporting corrupt and authoritarian regimes all over the Muslim world.

Yet, despite this resentment, only 4,000 Muslims actively seek to destroy America. These 4,000 Muslims are Osama bin Laden's foot soldiers. Let us remember that in 20 years of recruitment Osama bin Laden has only been able to recruit 4,000 men. This group, otherwise known as the Arab-Afghans, have theological and legal beliefs that are at odds with the remaining one billion-plus Muslims in the world today. (As a Muslim sect they are known in the Arab world as Salafis and their intellectual centers lie in Saudi Arabia, the Arab Gulf states and Jordan. The essence of the Salafi ideology and message is to interpret the sources of revelation literally (a.k.a. strict constructionism), to reject much of the medieval Muslim legacy of commentaries and opinions, and to reestablish a Utopian Islamic community. They are not Luddites, However.)

They are also at odds with those of their supporters, the Taliban, who are fanatical Hanafis of the Deoband school. Surely, 4,000 men do not represent the entirety of the Islamic peoples? We should hammer this point home continually. We

should also deny Osama bin Laden the opportunity of feeding off Muslim resentment and his claim to represent them.

There are very practical steps the U.S. Government can take that will blow the wind out of Osama bin Laden's sails and sidestep the trap he has laid. I will begin with the most obvious. They are:

We should not send U.S. or Western troops and Special Forces into Afghanistan with the aim of arresting or killing Osama bin Laden. He has thought about this scenario and desires it. A military attack on him would provide a double victory: if he is killed he dies a martyr and symbol of resistance to Western domination; he also gets to kill a number of U.S. soldiers and tarnishes the image of America in the minds of ordinary Muslims.

Afghanistan is the most backward and probably the poorest country in the Islamic world; the image of the most powerful nation stomping on it will be a public relations disaster and will destabilise Arab regimes.

We must stop using inflammatory language, such as the U.S. President, Mr. George W. Bush's statement that this is a crusade. Such a word evokes nasty historical memories in the minds of Muslims, namely barbaric Europeans rampaging through the Eastern Mediterranean.

Crusade means essentially Christianity versus Islam and this is not the right message. The infelicity of this locution has presumably been brought to the attention of the President.

We must publish a list of all the Muslims and women and children who died in the World Trade Center attack, since Islamic law categorically prohibits this.

We must engage our own Muslim community leaders, and send the respected ones among them with facts to the Middle East and South Asia to meet with impartial and respected Islamic legal scholars; people who are respected by the man on the street and who are clearly not in the employ of their respective Governments. Scholars in Meccah, Medina and Riyadh will be central in this regard, as will scholars in India and Pakistan.

These scholars must be convinced to issue fatwas declaring Osama bin Laden's teachings and opinions illegal. Because it is prohibited by mainstream Islam, they cannot declare Osama bin Laden an infidel (a practice called *takfir*) and we should not expect this of them. These opinions will help bolster the consensus mentioned above and may convince the Taliban that they need to hand Osama bin Laden over.

We must encourage Muslim countries to lead the fight against Osama bin Laden. Support the Northern Alliance which has 15,000 troops in Afghanistan and work on the Pakistan moderates to get involved in the fight.

If retribution, as seems to be the case, has to take place and America must feel it is the prime agent in the pursuit of justice, then no military action can afford not to involve moderate Muslim forces and their cooperation. This is not a plea for war, far from it: there is too much bellicose rhetoric as it is.

In the not too distant future, we must make some subtle noise that we will be willing to reassess our foreign policies in the world.

I think if we take the steps outlined above we may be able to ostracise Osama bin Laden from the Muslim community and energise moderate Muslims to take centre stage again.

*(The writer is Assistant Professor of Islamic studies,
New York University.)*

The Consequences of American Foreign Policy!

Azam Saeed

The collapse of the twin towers which is a criminal tragedy has brought the American nation together. It has, however, also brought the world closer to further death and destruction. The angry reaction of people is understandable, but it is important that voices of reason also be heard by our lawmakers and political leaders so that they may exercise wisdom in their decisions.

It is difficult to find something good in the evil that took place a week ago. But we would lose our humanity if we did not strive exactly for such an objective. I would like to present two occasions for understanding how some good may come out of this tragedy, both for Muslims, as they recognise that they must stand up to extremism, and for Americans, as they are forced to confront the consequences of their country's foreign policies.

Countering Extremism in Islam

The problem of extremism within some elements who consider themselves "Muslim" is real, there is no gainsaying this stark reality. It might even be fair to say that this religion has not faced any problem serious as this in the last 1500 years of its existence. This crisis, if not checked effectively, threatens to damage the very fabric of this great religion. Ironically, the voices of the majority of Muslims, who are not extremists, have rarely been heard since most of the Muslim world, over the last half-century, has been ruled by dictatorial regimes whose sole concern has been the protection of their power, not the well-being of their people.

Without denying the seriousness of the challenge Islam faces in the form of extremism, we should remember that the problem of extremism is not unique to Islam. Other religions have tackled the same problem at some point in history. Four of

the world's largest religions are represented within my immediate family. Christianity and Hinduism are two of them and I would like to offer their example.

The genocide of the European Jewish people in the middle of the last century was one of the greatest crimes committed against humanity. Yet, it was carried out by ostensible Christians. Even in the United States today, most hate groups, such as the KKK or the Aryan Nation, use the Bible and its teachings to spread their hatred. But while burning the Cross may be their expression of hatred, that's not the message of true Christianity. The Reverend Jim Jones's suicide cult, or the Branch Davidians at Waco are similar examples within Christianity.

Hinduism, another fundamentally peaceful and harmonious religion, is also currently facing a serious problem of extremism in its midst. This problem has been festering in India for quite some time, and now has assumed a rapid pace in that society. While the modus operandi of the extremists in various groups may differ, their objectives are not so far apart. And they all derive their "inspiration" from one another. Any such deviant dogma can only be condemned and it cannot define the values and principles it hijacks to further its malicious designs.

One good thing emerging from the recent tragedy might be that ordinary Muslims, especially those in the Western world, would finally realise that the so-called Muslim governments have neither the incentive nor the will to solve such problems that are damaging the very essence of Muslim identity. Thus the leadership will now have to be taken by ordinary Muslims of intellect and understanding. And there already are individuals and groups working on this problem quite a lot of research has already been done to unearth the ideological source, financial sponsors, and propagation mechanisms of this problem. My hope is that such individuals and groups will now join forces to move this work forward. There should be no question in any reasonable person's mind: Islam is fundamentally a religion of peace, kindness and compassion. I wouldn't be a Muslim today if it weren't. Fifteen hundred years

ago, quite contrary to the prevalent misperception in this country, Islam offered a clear and practical concept of human equality without any differentiation based upon one's race, gender, creed, age or any such distinctions....

Understanding the Consequences of America's Foreign Policies

We Americans seem so surprised and clueless about why other people have a grudge against us. We talk about "mindless" terrorism and "crazy" people, yet we know that there is nothing mindless or crazy about something planned so meticulously by so many individuals over such a long time. It clearly was deliberate.

We hear from our politicians that "madmen" hold a grudge against us because we are the "brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity" to the world....

How many times need we be told that the chickens are coming home to roost before we see the obvious? A few years ago, US marines, along with other international peacekeepers were sent to Somalia during the civil war there. Some marines became casualties of the conflict and it understandably sent a shock wave in our society and the media. But no journalist or official ever mentioned that both the US and the then USSR, during the decades of Cold War, had themselves created the problem in the first place by supporting warring factions and providing them with huge quantities of armament and ammunition.

The hatred, in the minds and hearts of many Somalis, against us Americans had a simple and understandable reason. For a Somali American, however, to get up and bluntly make that assertion would have been imprudent, especially when all that was presented to us was that Somalis were publicly dragging the dead bodies of Americans and dancing around those dead bodies. It would, however, have certainly been helpful if known and respected figures, especially in the media, raised their voices of reason and provided the background. But it did not happen. And we Americans failed to learn from this experience, missing another opportunity to put our international strategy on the right track.

Hate-mongers Calling for Blood!

Nector Carreon

In the aftermath of the attacks on New York and Washington D.C., we are hearing disturbing cries from hate-mongers calling for "blood". The cries could easily be dismissed if they were coming from the fringe elements of the US society, but the fact that they are coming from US Congress persons, senators and even the President makes this "round'em up" and "string'em up" mentality particularly disturbing.

This fact that many of our elected federal representatives could not even point to where the West Bank is located on our world map should be equally disturbing for all Americans. We presently have a President who flunked Diplomacy 101 at Harvard and who is probably relying on calling his dad for instructions on what to do next. Make no mistake about it, what you have witnessed on television and the Internet concerning the destruction of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon is actually a total failure of our US foreign policy.

As a Vietnam War veteran, I can recall another US foreign policy folly that cost us dearly in terms of human lives and societal divisions that still remain unhealed: I thought that we had learnt a lesson, but the current talk at the national level makes me think that we have not. I can also remember other foreign policy follies concerning South and Central America whose consequences have not yet fully manifested and the one developing in Columbia bears close watching by all Americans who love freedom. Why does the world hate us so? We must look into our own policies towards other cultures, religions, and national groups for an answer. We must look into who is running our US State Department and for whose interests.

Our racist attitudes against the Arab people are no coincidence. It is a matter of national policy and of what we are learning through curriculums in schools systems throughout the country and through the mainstream media. The Arabs and Muslims have been demonised. Last night, I heard a comment on a national radio station that "Allah is evil." Unfortunately,

this is what many Americans believe because of years of mental programming through biased education and media propaganda. This kind of mentality is the same as when US Mexicans are called "spies", "beaners" and "wetbacks" and Black Americans are called "niggers", "koonns", or "mayates". The kind of hateful racial frenzy being presently agitated against American Muslims and Arabs is no different than the one that was whipped up against Mexicans in 1930 Texas and against Blacks in the post slavery South that culminated in lynchings and in "stringing them up". Already we are hearing reports that a school bus carrying Muslim school children was attacked with stones and three little kids were killed in Australia.

We certainly do not want a "tit for tat" situation here in the US as it is presently in the Holy Land. New Yorkers have now "tasted" what both Palestinians and Jews have to endure on a daily basis. There is no doubt that our foreign policy in the Middle East has contributed to the attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon. Is not our support of Zionist too high a price to pay? Why are we supporting an Israeli apartheid policy that has made all of Islam our mortal enemy? If all our elected federal representatives studied the situation in Palestine carefully, they will see that what is occurring to many Palestinians is morally reprehensible. They however are either too ignorant or too cowardly to speak out against this present day holocaust against a people.

What we need is honest, moral and courageous national leadership which is unfortunately lacking. We presently have people like Congressman Condit of the House Select Committee on Intelligence and a mainstream media that divert us from the real world issues through focusing on things like "Where is Chandra Levy?" news coverage. But most of all, we need Americans who are well informed and not just interested in watching, basketball, football and soap operas on television. As minorities in the US seeking an equitable voice, let us brace ourselves for a wave of repression against our civil rights unprecedented in contemporary history. The bloodthirsty hate-mongers are on the loose, but with God's help and protection, we shall all prevail.

(The writer is the founder and editor of
La Voz de Aztlan and resides in Whittier, California)
(Meantime, Oct. 15, 2001.)

This War is a Fraud

*John Pilger,
Former Mirror chief foreign correspondent*

The war against terrorism is a fraud. After three weeks' bombing, not a single terrorist implicated in the attacks on America has been caught or killed in Afghanistan.

Instead, one of the poorest, most stricken nations has been terrorised by the most powerful – to the point where America pilots have run out of dubious “military” targets and are now destroying mud houses, a hospital, Red Cross warehouses, lorries carrying refugees.

Unlike the relentless pictures from New York, we are seeing almost nothing of this. Tony Blair has yet to tell us what the violent death of children – seven in one family – has to do with Osama bin Laden.

And why are cluster bombs being used? The British public should know about these bombs, which the RAF also uses. They spray hundreds of bomblets that have only one purpose: to kill and maim people. Those that do not explode lie on the ground like landmines, waiting for people to step on them.

If ever a weapon was designed specifically for acts of terrorism, this is it. I have seen the victims of American cluster weapons in other countries, such as the Laotian toddler who picked one up and had her right leg and face blown off. Be assured this is now happening in Afghanistan, in your name.

None of those directly involved in the September 11 atrocity was Afghani. Most were Saudis, who apparently did their planning and training in Germany and the United States.

The camps which the Taliban allowed bin Laden to use were emptied weeks ago. Moreover, the Taliban itself is a creation of the Americans and the British. In the 1980s the tribal army that produced them was funded by the CIA and trained by the SAS to fight the Russians.

The hypocrisy does not stop there. When the Taliban took Kabul in 1996, Washington said nothing. Why? Because Taliban leaders were soon on their way to Houston, Texas, to be entertained by executives of the oil company, Unocal.

With secret US government approval, the company offered them a generous cut of the profits of the oil and gas pumped through a pipeline that the Americans wanted to build from Soviet central Asia through Afghanistan.

A US diplomat said: "The Taliban will probably develop like the Saudis did." He explained that Afghanistan would become an American oil colony, there would be huge profits for the West, no democracy and the legal persecution of Women. "We can live with that," he said.

Although the deal fell through, it remains an urgent priority of the administration of George W. Bush which is steeped in the oil industry. Bush's concealed agenda is to exploit the oil and gas reserves in the Caspian basin, the greatest source of untapped fossil fuel on earth and enough, according to one estimate, to meet America's voracious energy needs for a generation. Only if the pipeline runs through Afghanistan can the Americans hope to control it.

So, not surprisingly, US Secretary of State Colin Powell is now referring to "moderate" Taliban, who will join an American-sponsored "loose federation" to run Afghanistan. The "war on terrorism" is a cover for this: a means of achieving American strategic aims that lie behind the flag-waving façade of great power.

The Royal Marines, who will do the real dirty work, will be little more than mercenaries for Washington's imperial ambitions, not to mention the extraordinary pretensions of Blair himself. Having made Britain a target for terrorism with his bellicose "shoulder to shoulder" with Bush nonsense, he is now prepared to send troops to a battlefield where the goals are so uncertain that even the Chief of the Defence Staff says the conflict "could last 50 years".

The irresponsibility of this is breathtaking; the pressure on Pakistan alone could ignite an unprecedented crisis across the Indian sub-continent. Having reported many wars, I am

always struck by the absurdity of effete politicians eager to wave farewell to young soldiers, but who themselves would not say boo to a Taliban goose.

In the days of gunboats, our imperial leaders covered their violence in the “morality” of their actions. Blair is no different. Like them, his selective moralising omits the most basic truth. Nothing justified the killing of innocent people in America on September 11, and nothing justifies the killing of innocent people anywhere else.

By killing innocents in Afghanistan, Blair and Bush stoop to the level of the criminal outrage in New York. Once your cluster bomb “mistakes” and “blunders” are a pretence. Murder is murder, regardless of whether you crash a plane into a building or order and collude with it from the oval office and Downing Street.

If Blair was really opposed to all forms of terrorism, he would get Britain out of the arms trade. On the day of the Twin Towers attack, an “arms fair”, selling weapons of terror (like cluster bombs and missiles) to assorted tyrants and human rights abusers, opened in London’s Docklands with the full backing of the Blair government.

Britain’s biggest arms customer is the medieval Saudi regime, which beheads heretics and spawned the religious fanaticism of Taliban.

If he really wanted to demonstrate “the moral fibre of Britain”, Blair would do everything in his power to lift the threat of violence in those parts of the world where there is great and justifiable grievance and anger.

He would do more than make gestures; he would demand that Israel ends its illegal occupation of Palestine and withdraw to its borders prior to the 1967 war, as ordered by the Security Council, of which Britain is a permanent member.

He would call for an end to the genocidal blockade which the UN – in reality, America and Britain – has imposed on the suffering people of Iraq for more than a decade, causing the deaths of half a million children under the age of five.

That’s more deaths of infants every month the number killed in the World Trade Center.

There are signs that Washington is about to extend its current "war" to Iraq; yet unknown to most of us, almost every day RAF and American aircraft already bomb Iraq. There are no headlines. There is nothing on the TV news. This terror is the longest-running Anglo-American bombing campaign since World War Two.

The Wall Street Journal reported that the US and Britain faced a "dilemma" in Iraq, because "few targets remain" "We're down to the last outhouse," said a US official. That was two years ago, and they're still bombing. The cost to the British taxpayers? \$800 million so far.

According to an internal UN report, covering a five month period, 41 percent of the casualties are civilians. In northern Iraq, I met a woman whose husband and four children were among the deaths listed in the report. He was a shepherd who was tending his sheep with his elderly father and his children when two planes attacked them, each making a sweep. It was an open valley; there were no military targets nearby.

"I want to see the pilot who did this," said the widow at the graveside of her entire family. For them, there was no service in St. Paul's Cathedral with the Queen in attendance; no rock concert with Paul McCartney.

The tragedy of the Iraqis, and the Palestinians, and the Afghans is a truth that is the very opposite of their caricature in much of the Western media.

Far from being the terrorists of the world, the overwhelming majority of the Islamic peoples of the Middle East and south Asia have been its victims – victims largely of the West's exploitation of precious natural resources in or near their countries.

There is no war on terrorism. If there was, the Royal Marines and the SAS would be storming the beaches of Florida, where more CIA-funded terrorists, ex-Latin America dictators and torturers, are given refuge than anywhere on earth.

There is, however, a continuing war of the powerful against the powerless, with new excuses, new hidden agendas, new lies. Before another child dies violently, or quietly from

arvation, before new fanatics are created in both the east and the west, it is time for the people of Britain to make their voices heard and to stop this fraudulent war – and demand the kind of bold, imaginative non-violent initiatives that require real political courage.

The other day, the parents of Greg Rodriguez, a young man who died in the World Trade Center, said this: “We had enough of the news to sense that our government is heading in the direction of violent revenge, with the prospect of sons, daughters, parents, friends in distant lands dying and nursing further grievances against us.

It is not the way to go... not in our son's name.

(www.Johnpilger.com)

The United States and Humanity!*

Zamiruddin

Does anybody know that it is for the first time, the United States and Europe are using words like humanity, civilians and innocent lives? The US has been the biggest violator of human values since World War II.

The attack on the World Trade Center in New York is so condemnable because it was purely a civilian structure. All those who were working at WTC and were on board the ill-fated aircrafts were innocent people. No human being will prove this type of action on a nonmilitary installation with civilian aircrafts as a weapon to destroy it. But did anybody know that it is for the first time the United States and Europe are using words like humanity, civilians and innocent lives? The US is the biggest violator of human values since World War II. The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour which was purely a defence installation, but remember what the US did in response – it attacked the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by dropping atom bombs. Are not the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki human beings? The US dropped bombs on the civilian population of Vietnam and the people there are still suffering. It attacked Libya in retaliation of a bomb attack in Tripoli. Many civilians died including the 5 year-old daughter of Col. Gaddafi, the Libyan President. Its forces shot down an Iranian civilian aircraft in the Persian Gulf. All the innocents on board were killed. There was no apology and no regrets. During the Gulf War, the US violated all norms of humanity and did not spare even those factories which were producing baby food. Half a million children died in Iraq due to unilateral imposition of sanctions. Again the US administration said that Saddam Hussein is responsible for the loss of innocent lives. When the US embassies were bombed in Kenya and Tanzania, many

innocent people died. There is no doubt that this is a terror act of some uncivilized and uncultured people. But what the so called civilized and cultured have done in retaliation? attacked Afghanistan and Sudan with cruise missiles and targeted a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan terming it as chemical plant. In all these attacks, only the civilian population was targeted. Why then there was no word from the humanists? Why words like humanity, innocent and civilians were not used for them. Why prayers were not held in memory of the innocent who were the victims of US brutality. America will not rest till it has taken thousands of innocent lives in Afghanistan, as it has to do something to convince the Americans that it is not silent. If it wants to take revenge, it has to do so only against Osama Bin Laden and then too only after acquiring the proof. Will it wait for the proof? Its past record shows that it has attacked on mere suspicion. There is a big question as to why only US is the target of terrorist attacks in the world. Why Uncle Sam is considered as their bitter enemy in Arab and Muslim countries. It is because of its double standards with Muslim countries and its unqualified support to Israel for its every act. This hatred towards US is not only confined to Muslim countries. But also in developing countries like Cuba, Nicaragua, North Korea, South Korea and China. There is a proverb – “Whether elephants play or quarrel, it is the grass which suffers.” This is what happened to the people of Afghanistan. Before the invasion by Soviet Union, Afghanistan was a peaceful and prosperous country. There were no Babrikarmals, no Najibullahs, no Mujahideens, no Taliban, no Osama Bin Ladens, but only Afghans. The CIA of US created a force of Afghans by giving them training to drive Soviet Union out of Afghanistan. The western media called them Mujahideen and later Taliban. Osama Bin Laden is one of the creations of CIA which has become a Frankenstein for it. Now the same Mujahideen and Taliban are called as terrorists. Who should the world blame for terrorists' acts – Frankenstein or its creator?

For US, there is no doubt; this is the hour of crisis. But India and Pakistan should not compete with each other to help US and get maximum benefit out of it. This will not happen

both because, the US follows the policy of use, crush and hrow. It used Saddam Hussein against Iran and crushed him before dumping it. It used Mujahideen, Taliban and Osama against the Soviet Union and is now on the verge of crushing hem. Both India and Pakistan must be cautious. The best lies or in good neighbourly relations and common understanding.

*(The writer is associated with the State
Minorities Commission.)*

Sleeping Death*

Hasan Suroor

The only American leader to have strongly opposed the bombing was Senator Joseph Biden, usually reputed to be a hawk rather than a liberal. But Biden was strongly attacked by leaders all round for saying that the bombing was only winning the US the anger of Islamic countries. The Republicans said Biden's speech had served only to "bring comfort to our enemies".

Countering Biden's views, military strategists and advisors, if not the political leaders, began taking the hard line last week in support of ground troops. The move has strong political support from Britain. "There are no differences between the Pentagon and the British at the military level," Col Terence Taylor from the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Washington, told *Outlook*. "The British would like to go for a military victory," he said. "You can't fiddle around trying to please everyone inside Afghanistan." This will need ground action "but Washington is not ready for that yet", Taylor said.

A struggle between opposing strategic schools in Washington will decide what kind of war America will wage against the Taliban and other targets, even what kind of America that will go to war. This isn't about Rumsfeld versus Powell, or about hawks and doves that come and go, though all that too does come into play. It's about the soaring influence of the Far Right which has taken up commanding positions within the Pentagon and now wants to call the shots – in the air and on the ground – because it believes that bombing is not enough, that there hasn't been enough bombing. It's a group that considers the CIA too weak. It's a group now being resisted by forces positioned short of the extreme Right, like the State Department, and yes, even the CIA.

* *Outlook*, Nov. 12, 2001.

Senator John McCain gave forceful expression to the Far Right-wingers last week. "War is a miserable business," he said. "Shed a tear, and then get on with the business of killing our enemies as quickly as we can, and as ruthlessly as we must." And stop doing it from the air, he said. McCain was a Navy pilot shot down in Vietnam and made prisoner of war; what he says the Pentagon and the military take seriously.

"No mountain is big enough, no cave deep enough to hide from the full fury of American power," McCain wrote in an article. The US "must change permanently the mindset of terrorists and those parts of Islamic populations who believe the terrorist conceit that they will prevail because America has not the stomach to wage a relentless, long-term and at times ruthless war to destroy them". Taliban soldiers will not come to the American side unless "a great many of their comrades have been killed by the US armed forces".

William Kristol, an influential leader in this group, feels the US is pursuing a flawed plan. The present American plan in Afghanistan has three things going wrong, he says. No ground troops, no confrontation with Iraq, and no alarm at home. "The result is no evident progress so far", he wrote in an article. Kristol said that "wishful thinking about air power has cost us seven weeks in which significant ground troops, not just Special Forces, could have been readied for action." The present strategy has meant that "we face the threat of Taliban's continuing in power through the winter", Kristol said. "It would convey an impression of American weakness."

Within government, the great champions of this line of thinking are Vice-President Dick Cheney, Defence Secretary Rumsfeld, and his deputy Paul Wolfowitz. "They are the neo-Cons (neo-Conservatives)," a senior diplomat said. "It's not just a few individuals you're talking about. They are placed all over the Pentagon in very influential positions." The 'neo-Cons' are said to follow the traditions of what came to be known in the seventies as Team B, a group of hardliners who had attacked the CIA for not seeing the Soviet threat as big as they thought it was. "They want to see the US backing a coalition of India and Israel finishing everyone else in

between," the diplomat said. It's hardliners from the Team B school that backed the Vietnam war and who are now asking for ground troops in Afghanistan.

Opposing the hardliners are Secretary of State Colin Powell and the State Department. "What you have here are enormous differences within a narrow group," says Dennis. "You have a group that wants what they call limited bombing of the kind we've seen, and one that says we're not bombing enough." But after Biden's speech last week there is no longer a dominant proponent in Washington of the view that the bombing should stop altogether, she said. Several leaders have expressed their doubts privately but few are now prepared to go public with their opposition to the bombing of Afghanistan.

The future of action will depend largely on what kind of intelligence the Americans get, analysts say. The lack of it has frustrated the military. Brigadier Roger Lane, commander of the Royal Marines, told the BBC he would not send his troops into Afghanistan until "suitable targets have been identified". Lane said: "We do not want to be too hasty. We need to be right." The only military operation carried out by US Special Forces so far led to a parachute drop on a deserted airfield and a return within a few hours because there was no information to go on.

"The forces were told they would be able to kidnap spiritual leader Mullah Omar," M. J. Gohel of the Asia Pacific Foundation told *Outlook*. "When they landed they couldn't find him. Washington is beginning to realize it made a big blunder in putting so much faith in Pakistan's ISI." Another major blow was the ex-Mujahid Abdul Haq's death, caught and killed in a lay. "Only the CIA and the ISI knew his whereabouts," Gohel said.

It is telling that the US is not offering any details on casualties or targets hit in the continuous bombing. "A command control center they say they've taken out usually means a hut with a phone that did not work," says Gohel. These failures are now beginning to haunt Washington. The department of defence is under strong pressure from the White House to show results.

For now, both Rumsfeld and Powell have indicated that they will not stop the bombing for the Ramzan period beginning mid-November. General Musharraf had asked for this. But the US administration is under strong pressure from hawks and the media to produce at least some successes against the Taliban before the winter sets in. Also, there seems little guarantee that the Northern Alliance will succeed.

"The US is finding itself in a situation where it has to rely solely on technological intelligence without getting anything credible from the ground," a diplomat said. "In the absence of such intelligence, it will be difficult to succeed from the air and disastrous to try to succeed with ground forces." The US State Department had earlier counseled subversive and diplomatic moves to get bin Laden. That view was brushed away under the weight of the militaristic right. The Far Right now wants to see massive troops on the ground in Afghanistan. This isn't Vietnam yet, but if they have their way, the US could be headed there.

Yes, US and Israel are Two Sides of the Same Coin!

A CNN survey of American public opinion towards the Palestinians and Israelis shows that 43 percent of Americans expressed support for Israel, while 11 percent of them expressed some sympathy with the Palestinians. It is a terrible shame!

*Khalid al-Maena**

FOR A LONG TIME, I believed that those Arabs who stated that America and Israel were two sides of the same coin were exaggerating. I really believed that as the violence in Occupied Palestine escalated, there would be questions asked by the American public about the use of freely supplied American weapons by the Zionist forces. I believed that there would eventually be a slight change of heart by the US Congress, which has provided Israel with \$92 billion of aid since 1967. I also believed that the pictures of Muhammad Al-Durra and of children being blown apart by US F-15s would in some way, however small, soften the hearts of the US lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

None of this happened. On the contrary, the Bush administration welcomed Ariel Sharon – the perpetrator of Saba and Shatila massacres – with open arms in the White House. George W. Bush may not be that wise in international affairs, but one thing he knows is that 2004 will come. He wants to be ready. And this is a great opportunity not to be missed. Some may get hot under the collar and accuse me of being naïve, but I really believe that the US government's main policy is to appease Tel Aviv.

In fact, members of the Congress are parrot-like, repeating to the American public that Israel is America's only ally in the Middle East, and because it is committed to similar values, the relationship should be strengthened. Talks of

*Editor-in-chief, *Arab News*.

relocating the US Embassy to Occupied Jerusalem have resurfaced among officials and in Congress it has got full support. The US media have also taken a lopsided view. The Palestinian victims of Israeli atrocities are portrayed as the attackers. The images of six and seven-year-old Palestinian children being shot at by Israeli soldiers using M-14 American rifles are distorted. "He feared for his life, therefore he shot," reported an American Journalist. I wonder how a stone can penetrate an American tank? But what is disturbing is that the American public which prides itself as being the most democratic and advanced in the world, having inherited Washingtonian and Jeffersonian principles, has shown its total lack of decency in this respect.

A CNN survey of American public opinion towards the Palestinians and Israelis shows that 43 percent of Americans expressed support for Israel, while 11 percent of them expressed some sympathy with the Palestinians. It is a terrible shame, but more Americans have expressed support for a ban on ending whaling and the killing of sea turtles. To these people, blood other than their own comes cheap. What then after all this can I say to those Arabs who attest very loudly to the US – Israeli design on Palestine? Are they believers in the conspiracy theory? Are they just venting their frustration by equating Israel's policies and the apparent US go-ahead? What then?

To make a random check on the gravity of the situation, I went through some of the news websites and what I found was shocking. I reproduce below some comments from these "democratic" citizens. I hope those Arabs who scoff at the idea of US and Israeli joint ventures in the area will take note:

- 1) Todd Homman from the USA: "I am ex-US military. I am very much pro-Israel because I believe that Jews are God's chosen people and I am calling for the elimination of all Muslim 'believers,' not the convert Muslims! I would die to keep Israel free! My relatives who were in the US military spent time in Israel and helped set up many of Israel's defenses. I too, like them,

would serve to protect the Holy Father's land! May God bless the people of Israel!"

- 2) Jerry from the USA: "If you guys would start a program where Americans could come to Israel and fight with the IDF, you would get a couple of million of us. Many of us have military training and could even bring our own weapons."
- 3) Jason from the USA: "I know in my heart that, when it's all said and done, Israel will prevail over the PLO terrorists."
- 4) Larry from the USA: "I support Israel in its fight for its homeland. I am praying that Jehovah, the one true living God, will give your enemy into your hands. I'll do what I can here in the US to make sure this country supports the Jewish nation, May God bless and keep you. I am now totally convinced."

Not to be outdone Holland, which after the United States is the most pro-Israel country, has many of its "cultured" citizens send support mail. Here is one from a Mr. Blieng:

"God Bless Holland, Israel and the Jewish people, Shalom."

Well, I guess that says it all.

The writer is Editor-in-Chief, *Arab News*, and can be reached at almaacena@arabnews.com.

Were the Israelis in WTC Warned in Advance?

P. K. Niaz

E-MAILS ARE FLOWING after the kamikaze attack on September 11, on the twin tower buildings of the World Trade Center (WTC) in New York. My out-box contains articles by *Independent* correspondent and Middle East specialist Robert Fisk, Noam Chomsky and many others with and without names, who approached the subject from different angles.

But a report saying that 4,000 Israeli employees in WTC were absent on the day of the attack caught my attention as it appeared in the *Mauar TV* as well as in the *MSAN News* and *Al Watan* newspaper in Jordan. The next day, several Arab papers and some agencies carried the same item. The report said that the international media, particularly the Israelis, started mourning 4,000 Israelis who work at the twin towers. Later it became clear that those Israelis did not attend their office on that fateful day and they were safe in their flats. Arab diplomatic sources revealed to the Jordanian daily that the Israeli General Security Apparatus, the Shabak, gave the Israelis hints about the attack on the twin towers.

The next day, Israeli daily *Yediot Ahranot* revealed that the Shabak also prevented the nation's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who was due to travel to New York to participate in a festival organized by the Zionists, from flying. Though Sharon was interested in attending the festival, the security apparatus forced him to cancel the trip. The following day, terrorist attacks were launched. Even though the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the US interior security department, arrested five Israelis, four hours after the attack on the twin towers, while filming the smoking skyline from the roof of their building, they were released after questioning.

The US authorities and the Western media, busy trying to trap Osama Bin Laden without any conclusive proof, have neither taken this matter seriously nor deny this as a baseless report. For its part, the Israeli agency Shabak refrained from informing the US authorities of the information it had. The FBI till this day, has not made any investigation on the mass leave taken by the Israeli citizens who work in the WTC. According to the *Washington Post*, 113 Israelis (not all Jews) are believed to be killed in the twin tower attacks. So how could this big number of Israelis escape? At least an investigation will help to reveal the truth behind this. But the media, especially the CNN moved their cameras towards Islamic militants and even showed the wrong footage of Palestinian people celebrating in the streets. This footage is said to have been taken during Iraq's Kuwait invasion in 1990. The authenticity of that picture should be questioned technically also, as American journalist William Cooper has rightly pointed out that the video of the Palestinian celebration was made at around noon according to the visible shadows. He says that at the time the video was shot it had to have been near or after sunset in that part of the world. Therefore it is clear that the video could not have been shot on the day or at the time claimed.

David Stern, an expert on Israeli intelligence operations has claimed that this attack was too sophisticated for a lone terrorist group to execute. His claims were based on a US military source that has revealed details of an internal memo that point to the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad for having links to the attack. Ehud Sprinzak, an Israeli counter terrorism expert in Jerusalem, had greeted the news of the attack in the US, stating it as the most important public relations act ever committed in favour of the Jewish nation.

The Jerusalem correspondent of the *Island News Paper*, Alan Philips, quoted his statement in his report that appeared in the daily on September 14.

Many international agencies have come out with fresh findings, which are against blaming Osama bin Laden for masterminding the September 11 attack. The director of the Pan European police force Europol, Juergen Storeback, has warned

against rushing to blame Laden and said a more serious investigation was required to avoid bringing the wrong people to account. 'It's possible that Bin Laden was informed about the operation, it's even possible that he influenced it, but he's probably not the man who steered every action or controlled the detailed plan,' Storebeck said.

The US preparation for the so-called retaliation against the attack and building up a global anti-terror alliance has received condemnation in the Arab world. President Bush called Americans to prepare for a long "Crusade," a term that has been interpreted to mean a Christian holy war against Muslims. Palestinian Islamic resistance movement Hamas has warned America that they are waging a war against Islam and reminds George W Bush that the religious battles are long and wild. Last week, Hamas founder, Sheikh Ahmad Yaseen told Reuters in an interview in the Gaza Strip that those who want to destroy the Islamic state should look back at the experience of the Crusades, as they will be defeated at the end.

Why doesn't a needle of suspicion arise against Israel since its secret apparatus Mossad has the worst track records? The Jewish nation has carried out many overt operations against America in the past. The Lavon affair, the attack on USS Liberty in 1967 and the espionage episode involving Jonathan Pollard, who is serving jail sentence in the US are just a few incidents that have been exposed. A recently published book ("The Body of Secrets" by James Bamford) on the US National Security Agency cites a 1962 secret plan by the military leaders to commit terrorist acts against Americans and blame Cuba to create a pretext for invasion and the ouster of Communist leader Fidel Castro. Waging a war against whom? That's the question to be answered.

(Meantime, Oct. 15, 2001.)

Blossoms in the Dust

*Mir Ali Husain**

On September 15, the Brecht Forum in mid-town Manhattan wore an unusual look. Approximately 200 people had squeezed into a hall meant for smaller numbers. Many of us had taken the subway to the meeting and paused for a moment to look at the gaping hole in the skyline that was still filled with smoke and dust from the rubble that once was the World Trade Center. The mood was sombre, but there was an air of expectancy in the room. Everyone knew that the world had changed, the battle-lines redrawn and the terrain of engagement altered. The assembled gathering, representing over 75 different organisations, each with its own separate cause, seemed united in a common purpose – to do what they could to quieten the growing roar that was crying havoc as a prelude to letting slip the dogs of war.

One by one, the groups introduced themselves. New York Greens, War Resisters League, Artists' Network, Jews for Racial and Economic Justice, Palestinian Right to Return Coalition, Forum of Indian Leftists, Centre for Immigrant Families, Armenian Sisters, Freedom Socialist Party, Battered Women Resource Center, Taxi Workers Alliance... the list read like a who's who of progressive politics in NY while the sheer number was a reminder of the fracturing of the left in the age of post-modernism. Arguments brewed – some wanted to endorse peace, some wished to understand violence, and many predictably invoked Gandhi's "an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind."

But by the end of the meeting, the group had agreed to converge on a six-pronged position. One, the attacks must be unequivocally condemned. There could be no possible justification for the mass murder of thousands of innocent

**Outlook*, Nov. 17, 2001.

people. The acts of the suicidal terrorists were morally indefensible, no matter what their motives. Two, the US must recognise its role in creating the monster that struck back with such vengeance. The contention that the US was reaping dragon's teeth harvest was endorsed. We have seen the enemy the opinion went, and the enemy is us. The numerous atrocities on the unsavoury resume of American foreign policy were enumerated. The list was long. And chilling. 1954: thousand of Guatemalan peasants killed by US-installed dictatorships. 1965: 3,000 murdered in the Dominican Republic. 1973: 30,000 casualties in a CIA-sponsored coup in Chile. 1965-1975: more than a million killed in Indonesia and East Timor. 1980s: 30,000 civilian deaths in Nicaragua. Thousands more in El Salvador, Panama, Palestine, Angola, Vietnam, Cambodia, Lebanon, Libya, Yugoslavia, Sudan. And of course, Iraq - 2,00,000 killed in Operation Desert Storm, including thousands of retreating Iraqi soldiers on the infamous "highway of death." A million more, including half a million children, dead due to the sanctions. Three, war was not the answer. They cycle of violence ought to be broken, not perpetuated. Four, the government should not be allowed to use the terrorist attacks to erode civil liberties. Five, global peace could only be achieved through global justice. And six, the growing swell of anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, anti-immigrant sentiment must be strongly opposed.

The mood was upbeat. Esperenza Martel of ProLibertad summed up the optimism: "We have the power to bring peace to the world. We have done it before. And we can do it again."

On the way back home, many of us stopped at Union Square, the site of a candle-light vigil the previous night. Bunches of people were standing around. A few guitars were out and peace songs were being strummed. Wax from hundreds of candles had melted and reformed in multi-coloured pools. The posters breathed a collective message of peace. "War is Not the Answer", "Islam is Not the Enemy", and "No Justice, No Peace."

Slowly, but steadily, a similar mood has been building up around the country. News filters in about scores of peace

allies. A thousand marched in a peace rally in Washington DC on September 14. A thousand in the tiny town of Northampton in Massachusetts on September 16. Hundreds standing in peace vigils each night at Boston's Copley. A huge rally at Sproul Plaza in Berkeley where participants wore green bands to indicate their solidarity with Muslim and Middle Eastern people. Another at the University of Madison. As one of the Madison organisers said: "While we deplore the deaths of innocent people in NY, we want to speak out against the collective punishment of any people or nation. We need restraint, not intimidation."

What's surprising is the speed with which anti-war sentiment has been harnessed. Tech-ins have been organised on almost every college campus and the message is unwaveringly one of restraint and peace. Says Anantakrishna, an organiser of one such event at the University of Minnesota: "It took five years of the Vietnam war before the first teach-in was organised. And now, there are already hundreds being held each day across the country."

At an inter-faith meeting in Palo Alto, Joan Baez led the congregation in song. People held hands, hugged each other, sang together, and wept openly. Says Silicon Valley executive Joppi Kallayil, who attended the meeting: "I think we were grieving for many things – at the immediate loss, destruction, and displacement. We were also grieving for the loss of a free and trusting way of life. We were grieving that we lived in such a multi-cultural world united in many ways while at the same time celebrating our diversity, and we were frightened that this may change. We have to preserve this beautiful world we know because we borrowed it from our children."

There is also a certain sense of urgency. Rahul Mahajan and Bob Jensen have been running the No War Collective out of Austin for the last several years. Mahajan says that "the destruction unleashed on Iraq during the Gulf War will be nothing compared to what is coming. Behind all this talk oftribution are US plans for an extended control of the region. This drive to vengeance and domination must be resisted." Jensen, a journalism professor and a long-time activist, claims

that “although much of the public is falling into a war posture, significant numbers are starting to resist. There is a new interest in the destructive consequence of the US foreign policy, and an openness to radical change. Unfortunately, those voices get little exposure in our media.”

It is this attitude of the mainstream media that invokes some anxiety in the anti-war activists. The periodic spurts of optimism are coupled with a sense of foreboding, a dark feeling that they may be spitting into the wind. For every Z Magazine and Common Dreams website that carries anti-war opinion, there are hundreds where the mood is different. In a characteristic piece, Steve Dunleavy of the *New York Post* wrote on September 12: “Kill the bastards. A gunshot between the eyes, blow them to smithereens, poison them if you have to. As for cities or countries that host these worms, bomb them into basketball courts.”

But in Boston, NY, Chicago, LA and almost everywhere, the attitude among the anti-war group reflects the pessimism of the intellect, but an optimism of the will. South Asian groups have been particularly active in this arena. The Alliance for a Democratic and Secular South Asia, INSAF, the Forum of Indian Leftists, Desis Rising Up and Moving, South Asians Against Police Brutality, Youth Solidarity Summer, and a number of other desi groups have been organising rallies, marches, vigils, and awareness-raising campaigns with compelling energy. The Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund has been offering legal help to those who have been victims of hate crimes. INSAF’s vigil, labelled South Asians United in Grief, was held at Jackson Heights, a predominantly South Asian neighbourhood, and was endorsed by the local merchants’ association.

As for the mainstream, Samuel Huntington’s evolutionary hypothesis of the clash of civilisations (Islam versus the West) has already started. But this time, the margins are not merely wringing their hands in despair. They are fighting back. A broad coalition of activists had planned a national march in Washington on September 29 to demonstrate against “reactionary foreign and domestic policy and the IMF and

World Bank.” The priorities have been reshuffled in a hurry. The march stands as planned. Only, the focus has changed. To stop war and produce economic, political and moral conditions to ensure justice, and therefore, peace.

Coda: A couple of days after the WTC crashed, I received an email from Brendan, a close friend at Madison. Along with some information about anti-war organising efforts was a one-line personal note that reads, “Let us turn this thing around.” Optimism of the will indeed.

'Bush Didn't Know What He Was Doing, He had to do Something'

Selig Harrison

Selig Harrison is a renowned South Asian expert and is considered extremely influential in Washington. He is currently working as a project director at the Century Foundation, a major think-tank, and as a senior scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. He was one of the first Americans to visit North Korea after the Korean War — as a representative of the *Washington Post*. He spoke to Sanjay Suri about Operation Enduring Freedom. Excerpts:

Are you happy with the way this war is going?

The whole notion of going to war in Afghanistan was ill-advised and self-defeating, and was destined to be unsuccessful because, as we saw during British rule and the Soviet occupation, Afghans don't like people coming into their country. From the very beginning, the Taliban have defined the whole conflict in terms of a holy war. So, Americans into Afghanistan shouldn't expect to be regarded as liberators. The US shouldn't expect cooperation from the Pashtoon tribes who are the major factor in dealing with the Al Qaeda and the Taliban. I think it's predictable that the US forces would do a lot of damage but then it would also produce a negative reaction among the people of Afghanistan. This feeling would intensify as the US military action intensifies, making it harder to achieve the results that the US has in mind.

the US relying on Pakistan to change things around?

I think the basic problem is that the ISI in Pakistan is deeply committed to the Taliban and has therefore not been providing to the US the kind of meaningful and precise intelligence that would enable the US to do what it set out to do; to find the Al Qaeda network, to find Osama bin Laden and find Mullah Omar.

What are the Americans getting out of Pakistan then?

I do think that helicopter access to those fields is a tangible gain for the US, but basically the US has given Pakistan much more than what it has got in this situation.

But isn't the US now dependent on Pakistan for logistics and for intelligence?

If we had good intelligence we could have avoided sending in ground troops and subjecting them to capture. We could have accomplished the objective by sending in special forces in helicopters and done what we had to do, because if we had good intelligence then we would have known where we were going. Now we are in a situation where there's a great danger of American forces being captured.

So, why are the Americans doing what they are in Afghanistan?

I think, basically, the attacks were traumatic for the Americans. It was such a horrendous thing that we had to retaliate to preserve our self-respect. Politically, Bush had no alternative but to retaliate. He had a choice of Iraq or Afghanistan. Since Afghanistan couldn't fight back, we attacked Afghanistan. They didn't really have a clear plan, they didn't know what they were doing, but they had to do something hoping for the best. They started out on this track underestimating what they faced, and with an exaggerated belief in the efficacy of air power.

Has the US had a hand in the past in provoking the creation of terrorist forces which it is now trying to destroy?

Of course. First, the US let Pakistan to decide which resistance groups in the Afghan war could get the weaponry. These were fundamentalist groups and the US encouraged bin Laden to bring people into Afghanistan from other parts of the Islamic world. We didn't back off until about 1990. Then we realised we'd created a monster, which some of us had been warning about for 10 years. I think that there's no question that the US policies during the Afghan war directly contributed to the growth of these terrorist groups. And I think that the US policies in Saudi Arabia are a major motivation for bin Laden to sponsor anti-American terrorism.

‘If They are Guilty, Where Is the Evidence?’

Robert Fisk

Two common items circulating on the Internet after September 11 have been Robert Fisk's dispatches for the *London Independent* and W.H. Auden's poem "September 1, 1939." The last stanza of that poem begins: "All I have is a voice/To undo the folded lie." That's what Fisk does: He uses his voice to expose falsehoods and highlight injustice and, as Auden put it, to "exchange messages" with the rest of us who are in this together.

The most decorated British foreign correspondent, Fisk has been based in the Middle East for the last twenty-five years, and his knowledge of the area is unparalleled. Here are excerpts of *The Progressive* editor Matthew Rothschild's recent talk with Fisk in Islamabad:

Do you think Osama bin Laden is responsible for the 11 Sept. attacks?

When you have a crime against humanity that is so awesome in scale and death, it is more than permissible to look around and say, who recently has been declaring war on the United States? Of course, the compass points straight to bin Laden. But why is it that we go to immense lengths getting the Serbs who were responsible for the massacre of 7,000 at Srebrenica – that's slightly more than the total figure for New York – and we take them to tribunal in The Hague, and one after another, we arraign them, try them, convict them, and punish them in front of the world, but no plans have been brought forward to get bin Laden and his friends and put them on trial?

What do you make of the evidence against bin Laden?

I was very struck by the fact that Colin Powell said he would produce evidence and then never produced it. Then Tony Blair produced a document of seventy paragraphs, but only the last nine referred to the World Trade Center, and they were not convincing. So we have a little problem here: If they're guilty,

where is the evidence? And if we can't hear the evidence, why are we going to war?

At the beginning of the war, you said the US might be falling into a trap. What did you mean?

If it is bin Laden, he's a very intelligent guy. He's been planning his war for a long time. I remember the last time I met him in 1997 in Afghanistan. It was so cold. When I awoke in the morning in the tent, I had frost in my hair. We were in a twenty-five-foot-wide and twenty-five-foot-high air raid shelter built into the solid rock of the mountain by bin Laden during the war against the Russians. And bin Laden said to me (he was being very careful, watching me writing it down), "From this mountain, Mr. Robert, upon which you are sitting, we beat the Russian army and helped break the Soviet Union. And I pray to God that he allows us to turn America into a shadow of itself." When I saw the pictures of New York without the World Trade Center, New York looked like a shadow of itself.

Bin Laden is not well read and he's not sophisticated, but he will have worked out very coldly what America would do in response to this. I'm sure he wanted America to attack Afghanistan. Once you do what your enemy wants, you are walking into a trap, whether you think it's the right thing to do or not.

And what is that trap?

To bring the Americans in, to strike so brutally and with so much blood at an innocent Muslim people that an explosion comes throughout the Middle East. Bin Laden was constantly revolving in his mind the fact that he had got rid of the Russians; therefore, the Americans can be got rid of, too. And where better than in the country where he knows how to fight? As things continue, it will be more and more difficult for the dictators, kings, and princes in the Middle East to go on justifying this. They are going to have to start saying, "No, stop." When they do that, the United States is going to have to ignore them. Once they are ignored, they lose the last element of respect. The longer this war goes on, the better for bin Laden.

You've interviewed bin Laden three times in the 1990s. What's he like?

He's very shrewd. But he struck me, even in 1997, as being remarkably out of touch. I remember thinking this does not look like the type of guy who walks to the top of a mountain with a mobile phone and says, "Operation B, attack." Bin Laden was very keen to point out to me that his forces had fought the Americans in Somalia. He also wanted to talk about how many mullahs in Pakistan were putting up posters saying, "We follow bin Laden." He even produced a sort of Kodak set of snapshots of graffiti supporting him, which had been spray-painted on the walls of Karachi four and a half years ago. He gave me some of the snapshots and said, "You can keep them, you can keep them. See, this is proof that my word is getting out."

So when the Americans put a million-dollar reward on his head, I thought, first of all, it probably isn't high enough; he could out pay anyone who tried to get it. Secondly, I can't think of anything he wanted more. Now he is America's number one enemy. He's always wanted to be that.

What is bin Laden after?

At the end of the day, bin Laden's interest is not Washington and New York, it's the Middle East. He wants Saudi Arabia. He wants to get rid of the House of Saud. There's a great deal of resentment, even inside the royal family, at the continued military presence of the United States there. Saudi Arabia is the most fragile of all Arab states, though we're not saying so. And, unfortunately, bin Laden puts his finger on the other longstanding injustices in the Arab world: the continued occupation of Palestinian land by the Israelis; the enormous, constant Arab anger with the tens of thousands of Iraqi children who are dying under sanctions; the feelings of humiliation of millions of Arabs living under petty dictators, almost all of whom are propped up by the West.

Whether he's doing it cynically and has no interest in these matters, or whether he's doing it out of genuine conviction, his voice has a tremendous resonance throughout

the Arab world. One editorial in a Lebanese paper said it is a matter of great humiliation for the Arabs that the only man who can outline, truthfully, what our humiliations are is an Arab who has to say it from a cave in a foreign country.

I've lived in the Middle East for twenty-five years. I know exactly how these issues come up. Even my landlord who is a moderate Lebanese guy, says "But bin Laden says what we think." These people believe that bin Laden is being targeted not because of the World Trade Center and Washington; they are not convinced by the evidence that has been produced. They believe he's being targeted because he tells the truth.

Bush says this is a war of freedom-loving people against the evil ones. What do you make of that?

The main Muslim partners of this so-called coalition are Uzbekistan, whose president, Islam Karimov, has 7,000 political prisoners, no opposition, and no free press; and Pakistan, which has a military dictator running the show. The three main local Muslim props of a famous coalition have nothing to do with democracy at all; nor are we trying to bring democracy to these countries. This isn't a war against terror, it's a war against America's enemies.

What's your opinion of the Northern Alliance?

The Taliban are iniquitous, but so is the Northern Alliance. Some of the guys in the Northern Alliance are war criminals. One of the Northern Alliance commanders ran a slave girl network in Kabul in 1994. Remember that there was a period when every woman on the streets was at risk of being raped. This was the Northern Alliance period of glory. These are our new foot soldiers. What was it that Cheney said the other day? "Some of the people who are on our side are not the kind of people we would invite to dinner or we would want as neighbours." Now that's sarcasm gone to obscenity.

Do you think Mohamed Atta was the mastermind of the attacks, or do you think he was taking orders?

You know, the whole issue of orders is something I've seen debating. We live in a society in the West, where, when men do violent things, they do them under orders. They are soldiers carrying out orders or mafia men carrying out killings for bosses. But the way things happen in the Middle East is not the same as in the West. Look, international capital has been globalized, so bin Laden is globalized. It's not surprising to find followers of bin Laden in all these countries. There are followers of Dunkin' Donuts and Colonel. What's His Name, if you see what I mean. Individuals in various countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia listen to the tapes of bin Laden. They gather in groups of four or five. They feel they want to do something to express their support for what they've heard. The idea that they were taking orders is a particularly Western idea. I still wonder if the United States realizes how much planning went into this. When we talk about "mindless terrorists," we are lying to ourselves. Because none of them – not the guy who walks into an Israel pizzeria full of kids, I was down that street, I covered that story – get up in the morning, eat some hummus, have a cup of coffee, and say, "Hmm. Let's go and set off a suicide bomb today." I've invariably found out they'd spent weeks and weeks and weeks planning it. It's not like they got this religious feeling, and one week later they blow themselves up. For example, the guys who drove cars into Israeli convoys would for weeks practice driving the same car on the same piece of road over and over again. Dummy runs, right?

Now these guys must have done dummy runs on the airplanes. They must have spent months buying airplane tickets, going on the same aircraft over and over, actually doing the whole journey, checking to see if the flight deck was normally open and how many crew members were on board. And of course, they worked out that a full fuel load would kill everyone and bring the World Trade Center down. These guys must have travelled up the elevators looking at the buildings, deciding which side to hit, and how many floors down you have to go..

They must have worked out the structural instability of the building. They must have taken many pictures of it.

What do you think are the roots of terrorism?

These terrible acts occur because of political situation and injustice in various parts of the world. The Middle East is heavy with injustice. After September 11, Bush announced that he had always had a vision of a Palestinian state. Why didn't he tell us that before September 11, when it would have been a bit more impressive? Then Tony Blair announces that he's always wanted a viable Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as the capital, and Arafat gets invited to Downing Street. Then Powell arrives here in Pakistan and announces he wants to solve the Kashmir crisis. All of which shows that the United States and Britain realize that there is a connection, otherwise why are they trying to patch up all these longstanding injustices suddenly now?

What about other causes of terrorism, like poverty and Islamic fundamentalism?

We love to think this is all about poverty, and of course, it has a connection. You can see that these people not only are poor but they have no outlets. These governments allow no opposition. So what do people do? They go to Islam. It's the only organizational institution where they can express their feelings. But it's not about poverty. I've never seen a single demonstration in Pakistan, in the streets of Gaza, in the West Bank, in which the people have come out with signs saying, "Please give us better roads. Please give us new prenatal clinics. Please give us a new sewage system." I'm sure they'd like those things, but it's not what they demand in the demonstrations. In the demonstrations they talk about justice, they talk about an end to Israeli occupation. In the demonstrations here in Pakistan, they talk about their anger at the killing of innocent Afghans. They talk about their need for democracy. But they do not talk about poverty. Fundamentalism is not bred in poverty.

There are plenty of poor countries in the world that don't have violence because amid the poverty there is a kind of justice and in some countries a democracy. The violence stems from injustice, because people feel they have been treated

unfairly, whether that means military occupation, starvation under U.N. sanction, whether it means that they have a dictatorship imposed on them, propped up by the West. This is why people turn to violence, because they have no other avenue left.

What's your take on the theological language coming out of Bush's mouth, as when he said: "God is not neutral"?

All I can say is that I remember the Siegfried Sasson poem in which God is listening to the soldiers on the German front lines and on the British front lines, both praying for victory. The line goes: "God this, God that. 'My God,' said God, 'I've got my work cut out.'"

What do you make of the talk in Washington about the possibility of going to Baghdad next?

If the Americans really want to make the Middle East explode, that's all they have to do. I mean, how much further in you go before you turn a whole people against you? How much more provocative do you have to be? You know, when you see what is happening out here, and you see it in the perspective of how many dead over how many years, the surprise to me is that we didn't see planes flying into buildings long ago. How come it took so long? This is not an excuse for these wicked crimes against humanity, but I'm very surprised it didn't happen earlier. And if we go into Iraq as well, then and by for more bin Ladens.

(*Milli Gazette*, Dec. 31, 2001)

US Campaign Against Afghanistan is Illegal

Brian J. Foleys

On September 11, terrorists killed thousands of Americans and left millions fearful of further attacks. The attacks are widely believed to have come from a terrorist network based in Afghanistan. On October 7, the United States launched a military offensive against that country in an effort to prevent future attacks. The U.S. has based its attacks on the international law right of self-defence. But with the U.S. campaign now in its fifth week, is the claim of self of self-defence still valid? Was it ever?

Surprisingly, few people are asking this question, based on a belief that the United Nations Security Council has already concluded in two resolutions (1368 and 1373) that the U.S. response is legal self-defence, and that the Security Council gave a green-light to "any means" the U.S. chooses to take. This belief is mistaken. A look at the full texts reveals otherwise.

This belief comes from the language of Resolution 1368, in which the Security Council (not individual nations) said it was "determined to combat by all means threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts," and "expressed its readiness to take all necessary steps to respond to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, and to combat all forms of terrorism, in accordance with its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations," and similar language in 1373. This language is styled broadly, but the resolution takes pains to note the Security Council's "responsibilities under the Charter," which would allow the Security Council to authorize force only under extremely limited circumstances, and when other measures are impossible – and most likely under a U.N. flag and command.

Also, when the Security Council actually outlined a broad array of means, in 1373, it did not mention 'force. Instead, it ordered member countries to freeze terrorist assets criminalize the financing and support of terrorists, exchange police information about terrorists, prevent movement of terrorists through increased border controls, and capture and prosecute terrorists.

Likewise, the resolutions do not conclude that the US strikes are self-defense. Repeating language from 1368 Resolution 1373 "reaffirm[ed] the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence as recognized by the Charter of the United Nations." As we shall see, this right "as recognized by the Charter" is extremely limited. Moreover, in practice the Security Council decides whether particular uses of force are self-defense only after the fact, and after careful consideration (given that, as shown below, self-defense is based on an immediate need to respond, and the response must be proportional to the threatened harm). The last of these resolutions, 1373, was issued on September 28, more than a week before the U.S. started bombing Afghanistan.

The U.S. campaign has been relentless and expansive. The following analysis will show that it has already exceeded the extremely limited right to self-defense under international law.

Self-Defense Under International Law

The U.N. Charter provides a sweeping prohibition against the use of force, commanding in Article 2(4) that, "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force." Self-defense is the lone instance where a nation can use force without prior approval from the U.N. Security Council. Contained in Article 51, the exception states:

"Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by members in the exercise of this right of self-defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect

the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security."

Like any exception to a rule, Article 51 must be interpreted strictly in light of the rule's purpose. That purpose is found in the first words of the U.N. Charter, which begins, "We the people of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind."

The international law standard for whether a particular use of force is self-defense comes from an 1837 incident where British subjects destroyed an American ship, the *Caroline*, in a U.S. port, because the *Caroline* had been used in American raids into Canadian territory. The British claimed the attack was self-defense. Through an exchange of diplomatic notes, the dispute was resolved in favour of the Americans. U.S. Secretary of State Daniel Webster urged the following definition of self-defense, which the British accepted: "There must be a necessity of self-defense, instant, overwhelming, leaving no choice of means, and no moment for deliberation. [The means of self-defence must involve] nothing unreasonable or excessive; since the act, justified by the necessity of self-defense, must be limited by that necessity, and kept clearly within it." This has been the accepted rule in international law ever since.

This strict standard helps prevent incidents and conflicts from escalating into war, which is the U.N.'s main purpose. Forcing nations to think up and consider non-violent responses even to illegal, horrific attacks by other nations prevents attacks from escalating into wars that can spin out of control.

This standard does not permit retaliation, and it also prohibits what international law scholars call "anticipatory self-defense." Most people agree that there is a difference between retaliation and self-defense; it's not hard to see how retaliation can lead to cycle of violence. It's harder to understand why "anticipatory self-defense" is prohibited. That's because many people do not appreciate that the legal definition of self-defense

is much narrower than our intuitive conception. That "the best defense is a good offense" may be true in football and other sports, but it is not enshrined in international or even our domestic law. For example, you can use force to fend off someone coming at you with a knife or gun, but you can't see out and kill someone who is plotting to kill you.

An example of "anticipatory self-defense" is Israel's strike against an Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981, to keep Iraq from developing a nuclear arsenal. The U.N. Security Council condemned the attack, because the threat to Israel, though foreseeable, was not "imminent." There was time to try other measures. Similarly, the U.N. Security Council also rejected Israel's argument that its 1985 attack on PLO headquarters in Tunis was self-defense. These two situations involved serious dangers, but in each instance there were options besides force.

Are the US Attacks "Necessary?"

Immediate Danger: First, we must ask whether bombing Afghanistan was necessary, and whether it continues to be necessary, to prevent "an immediate, overwhelming danger" from terrorists. There are no airliners flying from Afghani airports toward American targets, which the U.S. could legally intercept and destroy as an immediate danger. Do the terrorist training camps and Taliban government constitute an immediate threat? Although it appears they do not — the recent anthrax attacks have been coming from New Jersey.

The U.N. Security Council condemnation of the 1981 Israel attack against the Iraqi nuclear reactor is precedent that works against those who defend the U.S. attacks on Afghanistan as self-defense. Some international law scholars have argued that Israel's attack actually does meet the Caroline standard, because destroying the reactor may have been Israel's last chance to avoid a nuclear attack. Given the enormity of the threat — necessary, the argument goes. It must be noted, however, that these scholars are in the minority, and that the argument suffers because there were other means available to Israel at the time, such as U.N. intervention or sanctions.

On the other hand, if Al-Qaeda camps are developing weapons of mass destruction and training men to use them, might bombing these camps be the only chance for the U.S. to protect itself? A scenario likely to meet this strict standard would be if terrorists had a "suitcase" nuclear bomb and we knew where they were – and they were leaving Afghanistan imminently. Striking them in their camp would most likely meet the standard of self-defense. However, the U.S. government has not produced evidence of such immediate danger. The only "immediate" threats appear to be from "sleeper" terrorists already inside the U.S. and Europe.

What about the Taliban, whose army and government installations have been frequent U.S. targets? It appears that the Taliban has enabled Al-Qaeda, which may or may not pose an "immediate, overwhelming" threat. But the Taliban itself does not. No terrorist acts have been attributed to them, and there is no evidence that the Taliban is planning any immediate ones.

Choice of Means: Second, whether our attacks are "necessary" depends on the options available – there must be "no choice of means." Has the U.S. worked hard to avoid war and followed the advice of the many experts on the Middle East who have outlined peaceful, diplomatic solutions? Did our government attempt to negotiate a peaceful solution?

President Bush has twice refused Taliban offers to turn bin Laden over to a third country if evidence against him is produced, instead of holding to this initial demand to hand over bin Laden immediately and unconditionally, "dead or alive." The Taliban's offer was similar to what the U.S. agreed to concerning the Libyans suspected of bombing Pan Am 103 in 1988.

Under the U.N. rules, the U.S. should negotiate. All countries have a responsibility to avoid the calamity of war – and calamity is possible here. The Middle East is even less stable now that we've bombed, and some of its powers are nuclear. Pakistan is less stable as a result of the U.S. campaign, and many of its citizens are rushing to Afghanistan to Join Taliban forces.

Indeed, the U.S. may have been better served by supporting a U.N.-led incursion into Afghanistan. U.N. action would have lent more moral authority to the campaign and would have sent the Taliban a loud message that the world, not just the U.S., disapproves. To its credit, the U.S. did build a coalition, but it lacks the symbolic, moral authority of the U.N. Using the U.N. might also have prevented some of the anti-Americanism that has risen since the bombing began, and which will likely fuel future terrorist attacks.

The U.S. has been pursuing other means, including those outlined in U.N. Resolution 1373: working with police bureaus from other nations, moving against terrorists' funds, and ratcheting up border security. In fact, domestic police investigations to disrupt and destroy terrorist networks, and increasing domestic security overall, may prove to be the best means of preventing terrorist attacks.

Certainly, whether the U.S. attacks are necessary is a close question. Bin Laden is intent on destroying Americans, and he uses stealth and surprise, leaving the U.S. few chances to stop him. However, international law does not allow countries to strike enemies who are likely to commit nefarious deeds unless there is an immediate, overwhelming danger that leaves no other means available. The U.S. must consider and try "other means" in good faith. Negotiating with the Taliban might be unsavory, but as the U.N. Charter warns us, the "scourge of war" is far worse.

Are the US Attacks Excessive in Light of the Threatened Harm?

The second requirement for acting in self-defense is to use only the force necessary, "nothing unreasonable or excessive." This requirement is often rephrased to say that any response must be "in proportion to" the threatened harm. Might a period approaching five weeks of daily bombs and missiles go beyond self-defense?

It depends on the threat — its size, what it is and where it is coming from. With Al-Qaeda, the threats appear numerous and unpredictable. In response to these threats, U.S. forces have

targeted Al-Qaeda camps as well as Taliban troops and government installations. The attacks continue to expand, in part to limit the threat to U.S. ground troops. The U.S. has also expanded its aims to include "nation building" – toppling the Taliban and installing a new government.

These attacks on Afghanistan most likely do not stand up as proportional to the threat of terrorism on U.S. soil, when the immediate threats appear to come from terrorists "sleeping" in the U.S. and other countries. Eradicating the Taliban, which although reprehensible poses only an indirect threat to the U.S. through its support of Al-Qaeda, also seems to go beyond proportional force.

Most of all, it is troubling that the U.S. continues to place Afghani civilians at risk of death to protect U.S. troops – especially given that international law and custom oblige troops to limit risks to non-combatants, not *vice versa*. This risk seems especially unnecessary given that we have already inserted soldiers into Afghanistan with no combat losses. Perhaps more damaging to the U.S. claim of self-defense is that, so far, the U.S. has not heeded calls from world leaders to stop bombing so that food may be trucked in now, before the roads are snowed in. Thousands, if not millions, of displaced Afghani civilians face the spectre of starvation in the coming months as winter tightens its grip on Afghanistan, making the roads impossible for food convoys.

The U.S. faces serious threats, but we must keep asking whether the U.S. is engaging in self-defense instead of illegal retaliation or outright aggression. September 11 may be seen as a crossroads for international law. The temptation to ignore it may be strong, but if nations follow international law in response even to these horrific attacks, international law will have even more authority and legitimacy to protect us – and future generations – from the scourge of war (*counterpoint*).

(Brain J. Foley is a professor at Widener University School of Law in Wilmington, Delaware.)

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Will Anyone Dare to Ask Why?

The Ultimate Cause of This Terrorism Is Our Support for and Involvement With Criminal Behaviour of Israel

*David Duke**

Terror in response to Terror

The Palestinians and many of their Arab allies have been the target of a half century of unrelenting Israeli terrorism.

In the late 1940s the Zionists took over Palestine and drove out 700,000 people from their homes through widespread acts of terrorism. Among those events was the sadistic massacre of 254 Palestinian mostly old men, women and children at Deir Yassin. It was an especially vicious, cold-blooded massacre characterized by Jews cutting apart the bellies of pregnant women. After the bloodletting, the murderers then purposely publicized the event so as to make people flee in panic from their homes and businesses from which they still haven't been allowed to return.

Former Israel Prime Minister, Manachem Begin, a participant in this horrendous massacre, boasted of the importance of Deir Yassin in his book *The Revolt: The Story of the Irgun*. He wrote that there would not have been a State of Israel without the "victory" of Deir Yassin. "The Hagan againe contingent, killing 300 American young men.

The Involvement of America in Israeli Crimes

Arabs know that almost every bomb that kills their people comes from America. Every bullet, every tank, every fighter plane, is manufactured and paid for by American

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dollars. It is America's billions of dollars of support that have enabled the Jewish state to terrorize the Arab people for half century.

Even though Israel invaded Lebanon and killed thousands of civilians, America never threatened to bomb Tel Aviv (as it did Iraq) if Israel refused to obey UN resolutions to withdraw. A comparison of America's reaction to Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait to Israel's Invasion of Lebanon is instructive.

America's one-sided policy foreign policy can be illustrated by the different treatment afforded Israel and Iraq.

Iraq invaded Kuwait. Israel invaded Lebanon.

Perhaps 3000 Kuwait civilians died in the initial war with Iraq. 40,000 Lebanese died from the time of the invasion through the occupation.

Iraq disobeyed UN resolutions to leave Kuwait. Israel disobeyed UN resolutions to leave Lebanon (for 18 years).

Iraq broke international conventions on chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. Yet Israel is a far greater offender, having one of the greatest stores of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons in the world.

Iraq refused UN inspections. Israel has always refused UN inspection.

For these violations we bombed Iraq. In response to Israel's crimes, America just continued to send more billions of dollars. American foreign policy was and continues to be Israel policy. Israel was not threatened with even a cut-off of US aid as thousands of Lebanese civilians died from the Israeli actions. Iraq was once a friend of America with whom we bought oil and did much business. America actually supported Saddam Hussein and Iraq's war with Iran. Iraq did nothing against the United States, but it made the mistake of becoming strong enemy of Israel. So the Jewish and the Jewish-controlled gentile bureaucrats, and Jewish-dominated media quickly made our former friend, Saddam Hussein, into our archenemy.

We dropped more explosives on Iraq in a few weeks than we had in the whole of the Second World War. We killed hundreds of thousands of Iraqis including tens of thousands of

civilians. Then we engaged in a blockade and embargo of Iraq that even the anti-Iraq United Nations sailed to the deaths of at least 1,200,000 children and hundreds of thousands of elderly. Let those Americans who don't understand the why of the terrorism concentrate on this shocking fact. One million, two hundred thousand children have died as a direct result of our policy toward Iraq.

Some Americans reading my words will refuse to believe it, they will refuse to believe that America has purposely caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands of children. Here is the transcript of the interview of America's Jewish Secretary of State with Leslie Stahl of CBS of March 11, 1996:

Lesley Stahl, speaking of US sanctions against Iraq: "We have heard that a half million children have died. I mean, that's more children than died in Hiroshima. And – and you know, is the price worth it?"

Madeline Albright: "I think this is a very hard choice, but the price – we think the price is worth it."

And some Americans wonder why we are so hated.

The Jewish Lobby and the Jewish-dominated media are very careful not to let the American people fully understand the real reason for the Iraq war or the true issues in the Palestinian question. They really don't want Americans to know why so many millions in the Arab world hate us and why the number grows larger every day.

They don't want us to know the real reasons why Americans are so hated – because it is the Jewish bosses of American foreign policy who are the ones responsible for this growing hatred of America. Imagine the anger and feelings of despair that would drive men to sacrifice their own lives to get at us.

The Zionist bosses know that by America's supporting the criminal policies of Israel spawns hatred against America. They are certainly aware that bombing and going to war against nations solely for Israel's benefit creates dedicated and fanatical enemies against America, enemies will seek revenge in American blood.

Of course, it is not in America's interest to go and kill people for Israel; but Jewish are always paramount. In actuality, they are fully aware that the brutal and stupid acts of terror that recently happened in New York and Washington only help the Zionist cause by engendering enormous American anger at Israeli enemies, and make Americans more easily manipulated to do the bidding of Israel.

Think about who really gained from this terror. Have the Palestinians benefited? This terrorist act destroyed all the progress the Palestinians have recently made with world opinion. It has blinded the world to Israeli terrorism. Israel is the only winner in this tragedy. They will now have green light to do anything they want against the Palestinians. They can kill any of their foes whether they are violent or non-violent. They will get all the money they want from the American people, and no one will be thinking about their on-going suppression, murder and human rights violations against the Palestinian people.

No, the Zionists are the only benefactors of the horrendous day of terror on September 11, 2001. Ironical isn't it, that although Zionist criminal was led to this terror, only the Zionists will benefit from it. Of course, the reason they benefit because the American mass media is complete their hands and it will never ask the proper questions of why these horrendous events are happening. Unfortunately, too few people will ever hear voices such as mine who dare to challenge the Zionist lies.

That's why we are in this mess, because a foreign power has become the most powerful lobby in the American government and controls the direction of the mass communication media in America.

Let me repeat that one more time. The primary reason we are suffering from terrorism in the United States today is because our government policy is completely subordinated to a foreign power: Israel and the efforts of worldwide Jewish Supremacism.

American Flags are flying everywhere in America in the aftermath of the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. That is good, for we need to be more patriotic. If we

ere more patriotic for the real interests of America rather than r Israel, we would not now suffer from terrorism.

And truly, what could be more patriotic than wanting r own country to be led by our own people in the service of merica; not a foreign power or a powerful minority.

Yes, we must fight tooth and nail against any terrorists ho attack our country. But, we must understand why this rror is occurring, and how has been spawned. It has occurred ecause of long-standing treason against the United States and er people.

What has Zionism cost the American people?

The Jewish Lobby and media power has cost the United tates about 6 billion dollars a year in foreign aid and weapons, most one third of America's entire foreign aid budget during e last half century and as much money spent in America's rug war.

It has poisoned our relations with the oil-rich Mideast ations. In response to our policies, the Arabs came together ad developed their "oil weapon" which has cost Americans at ast ten trillion dollars in higher oil costs.

It has alienated the entire Arab world, leading to estruction or confiscation of billions of dollars of American roperty in those countries, kidnapping of American citizens, ad generated enormous hatred for the American people.

How has Israel paid us back for our support? They have ontinually spied on us (the Jonthan Pollard Case), sold our ighest secret (such as to the biggest nuclear threat to us rrently in the world: the Communist Chinese) and stolen our nriched uranium for their illegal nuclear weapons.

They have launched terrorist attacks against the United tates such as the Lavon Affair and the Attack on the USS ibility. Both these acts were nothing short of vicious acts of ar against the United States. Providing false information for merica to wrongly go to war against another country is also othing less than an Israeli act of war against the United States. et, in response to these despicable actions against America, ur Zionist controlled leaders did not even reduce our billions

of dollars of financial and military aid to Israel. We give Israel about 6 billion dollars in aid each year, that is more than all the nations of Sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean and South America.

What is the latest cost of our subservience to the criminal actions of Zionism? The latest price we have paid is the horrendous acts of terrorism on September 11, 2001.

The powerful agents of Israel in American media and government are ultimately responsible for this terror against the United States just as surely as if they themselves had piloted those planes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

And now they cynically plan to use the terror that they themselves created inspired the cycle of violence against Israel's enemies. You can be sure that the Zionist powers plan to do far more than simply punish the perpetrators of these events. America will once again be used to strike against whomever Israel wants.

An indiscriminate or intemperate response from America would ultimately produce even more hatred against America, and bring more terrorist acts upon the heads of the American people. The increasing cycle of hatred is exactly what the Zionists want; for their aim is that we will fight Israel's enemies for them, spilling our blood instead of theirs. They are only ones who truly benefit from America's pain. Rather than Israel, we will pay the ultimate price.

Fighting Terrorism with Terrorism

Many in the American media and government are screaming for mass destruction against America's newly perceived enemies. Recent opinion polls (CBS and CNN) show that 60 to 75 percent of the American people endorse warfare against suspected terrorists. They support these actions (and I quote the poll question precisely) "even if it causes the deaths of thousands of innocent people." It hurts my heart to think that the vast majority of the American people take exactly the same view toward innocent human life, as did the terrorists of September 11.

So far, I have heard no one, not one of the great moral pontificators, the President of the United States, our church leaders, or anyone else of prominence who is brave enough to point out this blatant moral hypocrisy.

So we are now going to fight terrorism. So what happens when America goes out and bombs the hell out of countries and indiscriminately kill "thousands of innocent people." Will we really end the threat of terrorism? America has done the same thing before. Let's take a look at how it has worked out for us. As pointed out earlier, in 1986 the Israelis gave America false evidence against Libya and induced us to bomb the hell out of the country. We bombed a nation to "fight terrorism" for a crime it did not even commit. A year after our bombing, a few members of a radical group in Libya sought revenge and bombed Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, causing one of the worst air disasters of all time, killing 270. We exact our revenge with B-1 bombers; they do it through suicide bombers.

There is no way to completely protect ourselves from these kinds of acts. Even one fanatic person, if he is willing to commit suicide, they can easily cause a plane to crash with a minimal amount of (non-detectable) explosives. We live in an era in which deadly biological agents of mass destruction can be made in anyone's basement. America must take heed; the next terroristic act can be committed by just one person and kill hundreds of thousands of people. The exercise of brute military force can no longer protect any nation.

Does anyone remember America's last "attack on terrorism?" Clinton promised to wage a "war on terrorism" by bombing Afghanistan and by bombing a pharmaceutical complex in the Sudan. These attacks were cynically launched by Clinton during critical days of the Monica Lewinsky scandal. They failed to kill Bin Laden, but they caused the Taliban to vow bloody revenge against America for the death and destruction in his country. The events of September 11 may be a direct result of that "war on terrorism." Let me repeat, we send our B-1 bombers and they send their suicide bombers. And now, unless cooler head prevail, we are ready to embark

on another war on terrorism that may kill thousands of innocent people and escalate the cycle of violence.

Heal the Wounds and Put the Well-Being of America First

Unless we heal the wounds and give America a better course, every new missile and bomb we send will come back to us again. Every drop of blood we spill in foreign lands will result in more American blood lost here and abroad. America will sink more and more into uncertainty and fear.

After the events of September 11, a father who lost his daughter in the Lockerbie plane crash, John Mosey, wrote to British Prime Minister Tony Blair. He pointed out that the 27 who died in the 1988 bombing were killed in reprisal for "aggressive" US policies in the Arab world. He went on to caution, "The utmost care must be taken that whatever path is eventually pursued is successful and does not harm innocent people, thus producing another batch of terrorists."

We must have cool heads now and break this cycle of violence.

Let us pray for the American victims of these events and for their suffering families. Let us go after the perpetrator of these dastardly acts with absolute precision.

But, even more importantly, let us understand why these events occurred and how we can heal the hatred against our nation.

Many traitors in our government have supported Zionism's criminal activities rather than the true interests of the American people. They have spawned the hatred that drove these terrible acts. Unless their power is broken Americans will be haunted by an increasing spectre of terrorism.

Once we understand the reason why, then we will agree on the sure way to prevent such terroristic acts in the future.

The solution to this huge problem is extremely obvious and it is very simple.

America must heed the farewell address of the Father of our Country and "avoid foreign entanglements."

Finally, we must always put America and the American People first.

America's War

Sukumar Muralidharan

As the United States of America continues its relentless build-up of military force in South and Central Asia, the world watches with growing unease and trepidation. Lethal weaponry has left the shores of the U.S. on a massive scale along with supportive military assets. Even if the destinations to which these deadly payloads have been transported are a closely guarded secret, there is little ambiguity about the purpose to which they are to be put. Landlocked and impoverished, ruined by two decades of war, drafted into a holy war against communism and then abandoned to a cruel fate dictated by religious fundamentalists who had flourished under U.S. patronage, Afghanistan has become the theatre of the new crusade.

Bringing up an eager rearguard in the U.S. campaign against global terrorism – code named Infinite Justice in a deliberate usurpation of a mandate reserved in most systems of faith for a divine, supernatural being – is the United Kingdom. The U.S.'s most loyal and obsequious ally today seeks to return to the battleground that has several times in the past frustrated its insatiable instincts for imperial expansion. Although never a credible state with a strong central authority, Afghanistan as an amalgam of tribal affiliations and ethnic loyalties was always able to push back any effort at subjugation from outside. For long, it was the uneasy neutral zone between Russian and British imperialism, which often succeeded in penetrating from opposite ends of the compass, though never in establishing a semblance of control. The decisive struggle in the 1980s pitted the forces of modernisation against medievalism, with the U.S. being the principal prop of the latter. Today these forces have returned to haunt their sponsors, who in turn have embarked upon a final effort to extinguish the fires they had unleashed. But Afghanistan will not by any means be the only frontier of

the new wars of Western imperialism. The new phase of conflict is indeed one with infinite possibilities.

Pakistan will be among the first countries to be directly touched in the new wars of Western imperialism. This has implications which go right to the core of India's turbulent relations with its neighbour. After a maladroit effort to offer itself as a staging post for the new wars, India has seemingly retreated, reduced to a petulant sulk by the U.S. indifference to its ardour. The tone of superior wisdom, though, is still evident in most official pronouncements. The official pretence now is that on September 11 the U.S. only suffered a grotesque escalation of a terrorist war that India has faced since long. In its obsession with Kashmir, the Indian government has turned its back on a long-standing national commitment to the struggle of Palestine against colonial oppression and sacrificed a vital interest in keeping the neighbourhood free of the intrusive attentions of the U.S.

Pakistan's central importance in the new wars has led to a correction of the U.S. tilt towards India, which until recently was considered the single most important achievement of the Jaswant Singh dispensation in the Ministry of External Affairs. It has for long been known that the U.S. was on the verge of lifting the sanctions imposed against India after the nuclear explosive test of 1998. The same special consideration was not expected to be extended to Pakistan, since it remained a problem state in U.S. eyes for several reasons. As the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage put it a few months ago, the U.S. had awoken to the realisation that its ties with Pakistan were always based not on mutual values but on the expediency of shared opposition to some other country. With the adversarial phase of world politics having ended with the Cold War, the U.S. had no incentive to maintain its erstwhile bonds with Pakistan at the risk of a long-overdue rapprochement with democratic India.

Sanctions against India and Pakistan have now been concurrently waived, since they are deemed to be contrary to the national security interests of the U.S. It would of course have been an absurd situation for the U.S. to land its mo-

sophisticated weaponry in a country that it still maintained military sanctions against. But more than military cooperation, the promise of increased financial flows into a faltering economy has provided a lifeline to the Pervez Musharraf regime in Pakistan. Trapped between the unrelenting demands of the U.S. and its own deep involvement with the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, the Pakistan military is bracing for a sharp increase in domestic dissent, even violence, in the event of an assault on Afghanistan. When hostilities commence, as they must, the humanitarian crisis on the border is likely to be transformed into catastrophe. And there is little indication that the Western powers will assume their share of responsibility in dealing with this. Indeed, under U.S. tutelage the United Nations Security Council has been adopting quite the opposite tack – imposing comprehensive economic sanctions against Afghanistan, collectively punishing a civilian population for the supposed crimes of a government, in violation of all international covenants.

Only the naïve and the misinformed in India can believe that the expected hostilities will not impinge deeply on life within this country. An undercurrent of popular resentment is ready evident against the Atal Behari Vajpayee government for the manner in which it sacrificed national honour in offering a virtual *carte blanche* to the U.S. to base its retaliatory operations on India territory. After resisting the effort to internationalise the Kashmir problem for decades, India is now in tacit connivance with this project, having of its own volition placed the political problem of Kashmir within the context of international Islamic militancy. India's traditional friends within the Third World are unimpressed by the new turn in policy. Their ability to support India on the Kashmir issue would correspondingly be undermined, forcing India to fall back increasingly on its newfound and opportunistic friendship with the terrorist state of Israel.

Terror struck New York out of a clear blue sky on September 11, as thousands of ordinary Americans were beginning a workaday morning. Few accounts since then have been able to capture the infinite horror and shock of those

moments between the aircraft hits on two of the tallest buildings in the world and their final collapse. And few expressions of grief since have proved quite adequate to the trauma of the occasion. The national capital of Washington suffered one hit on the Pentagon, the nerve centre of the U.S. military command hierarchy. Another was averted in circumstances that are yet to be fully determined, when a hijacked aircraft crashed in the State of Pennsylvania. After careening to distant corners of the continent while his nation was under attack, President George Bush arrived back in Washington late in the evening to outline the broad agenda for retaliatory action.

Deeply embarrassed by their boss' prudent absence from his command post at a moment of crisis, Bush's handlers sought to contain the damage by leaking word, through *The New York Times* columnist, English language pundit and right wing ideologue William Safire, that a mole in the White House had provided secret codes to the terrorists, enabling them to make a direct threat to the presidential aircraft through secure telephone lines. This outrageously fanciful conspiracy theory was subsequently debunked.

Equally curious was the absolute invisibility for days after the attack of Vice-President Dick Cheney, designated the informal head of the administration's counter terrorism operations. Two days after the event, it was officially announced that Cheney had been transferred to the presidential retreat at Camp David in the State of Maryland, in order to ensure that the line of succession to the presidency was not threatened by a possible terrorist strike in Washington. The legible gullible political analysts had a different interpretation. Cheney's enforced absence from the national capital was intended to focus attention on Bush, affording him the opportunity to look the part of a President.

Never at ease at occasions that he has not rehearsed for Bush repeatedly sought out the vocabulary of the wild frontier of the colonisation of America. The favoured words, repeated *ad nauseam* before a largely uncritical global media, were hunting down and smoking out the perpetrators of terrorism.

September 11 attacks. And from Day 2 of the attack, Osama bin Laden, the fugitive Saudi Arabian multi-millionaire with a self-proclaimed mission of liberating his homeland from the occupation of U.S. forces, began to be identified as the prime suspect.

The full dimensions of the proposed campaign were spelt out two days after the terrorist strikes by the ultra-hawkish Deputy Secretary for Defence, Paul Wolfowitz. The administration, he said, would mount a broad and sustained campaign in response to the attacks against the U.S. It is not simply a matter of capturing people and holding them accountable, but removing the sanctuaries, removing the support systems, ending states who sponsor terrorism.

This was just the kind of revelation of intent that the U.S. administration could have done without, as Secretary of State Colin Powell began the tortuous process of lining up allies for the proposed retaliatory strikes. Expectedly Powell was at pains to tone down the bellicosity of Wolfowitz's statement: "We are after ending terrorism. And if there are states and regimes, nations, that support terrorism, we hope to persuade them that it is in their interest to stop doing that. But I think ending terrorism is where I would leave it."

Even as this disclaimer was issued, the official spokesman of the White House, Ari Fleischer, seemed to undermine its credibility by insisting that all states that maintained a hostile posture towards the U.S. needed to be aware of the full consequences of their attitude.

There was evident from the beginning of the crisis a division within the U.S. administration on the scope of its operations. Powell and his deputy Armitage were anxious to ensure a global consensus around U.S. military actions, by narrowly focussing the first strikes against targets that were proven to be helpable on September 11. Others such as Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and his deputy, who have been arguing for a final settling of accounts with U.S. designated rogue states since January, were believed to be pressing for a broad-ranging effort that would target Iraq, Iran, the Bekaa valley in southern Lebanon and possibly Sudan.

This divided counsel engendered a number of contradictions in the U.S. approach towards potential allies: Iran, for instance, engaged in a belligerent display of arms might along the long border it shares with Afghanistan just three years ago. It has little affinity for the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and has vaguely indicated that it will cooperate with the drive against terrorism. The U.S., which does not maintain diplomatic links with Iran, is believed to be using the U.K. as a conduit to firm up that country's backing and secure its assistance, perhaps most crucially in the matter of access to its airspace. But the U.S. State Department, in the annual catalogue of terrorist organisations it publishes, has listed a number of groups that are known to be extremely close to the Iranian government, putting Iran right in the foreground of the rogue states gallery. It is not clear what reassurances the U.S. can give at this stage, particularly when Iran's core concern over the Israeli occupation of Palestine remain unaddressed.

Saudi Arabia, which recognises the Taliban regime, remains another curiosity. It has kept up an enigmatic silence on its attitude towards Afghanistan and the Taliban. For those who are not deluded by U.S. claims that Saudi Arabia is an oasis of moderation and stability in the Arab world, the reasons would seem rather clear. First, bin Laden is known to have a powerful constituency within the desert kingdom, which would be roused to new levels of militancy if the Saudi monarch were to lend its support to any effort to capture and eliminate him. Secondly, the Saudi monarchy itself is known to maintain ties with bin Laden through various intermediaries, and till recently as last year was seeking to neutralise his militant movement through generous financial offers and assurances of rehabilitation within the higher ranks of Saudi society.

After several days of insistence that the world should accept bin Laden's culpability as an article of faith, the Bush administration seemed, under Powell's prodding, to soften its posture. Allies would be given concrete proof to establish the fact, said Powell, around the same time that he described the Saudi monarchy as very responsive to U.S. concerns. It seems

reasonable inference that the willingness to share information is an effort to win the allegiance of the Saudi monarchy.

Another pillar of the Pax Americana in the Arab world is clearly tottering. In a blunt riposte to the U.S. ultimatum that countries that refused to stand by it would be deemed to be allies of terrorism, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt has declined to join the proposed "coalition" against "global terrorism". He spelt out his reasons in a plaintive appeal to the U.S. on September 22: "If you launch an attack against Afghanistan or any other country on your list of rogue states, you will kill many innocent people, just as the terrorists killed many of your people. Don't play the game of the enemy. They want your reprisals to bring forth, from the blood and ruins of your bombing, a new generation of militants who will call for revenge against the United States."

Israel, the singular pole around which U.S. policy towards the Arab world revolves, was, meanwhile, utilising the paralysis of global decision-making for its own narrow purposes. On these successive days, the Israeli Army went into Palestinian controlled towns on ruthless "find and destroy" missions directed against the institutions and physical infrastructure of Palestinian society. Alarmed at the prospect of the Arab world turning hostile at a critical juncture, Powell insisted that a ceasefire be called. This was reluctantly granted by Israel, but a proposed meeting between Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres is yet to materialise. The thuggish Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, has denounced Arafat as an unrepentant terrorist who is partly culpable for the attacks on the U.S. and denied Peres permission for the meeting. In an unmistakable signal that the "government of national unity" in Israel is besieged from within, Peres boycotted a subsequent meeting of the Security Cabinet and deplored Sharon's recalcitrance at a moment when the U.S. desperately needed all the solidarity it could find among traditional allies.

Three days after the attack, George W. Bush was armed with the widest mandate to conduct war since 1964, when the U.S. Congress empowered President Lyndon Johnson to take

all necessary action to protect the U.S. armed forces against the unprovoked aggression of Vietnamese communists. The *casu belli* that Johnson cited was an alleged attack on U.S. naval vessels in the Tonkin Bay, now recognised as one of the clumsiest and least persuasive concoctions of the U.S. Defence Department. But in contrast to the relatively narrow mandate then conferred – which was subsequently expanded to cover the carpet-bombing of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos – the authorisation for war now is almost infinite in its scope.

This in itself should be reason for concern all over the world, and these worries are only compounded by the manifest incapacity of the incumbent U.S. President to address the problem before him in a manner that has a remote connection with rationality. His address to Congress on September 20, read by an adulatory media as a defining moment when a President retrieves the credibility and leadership qualities that had earlier been lacking, was a virtual declaration of lawlessness.

Whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done, declared President Bush. The intent behind the declaration is clear: either the enemies of the U.S. will be smoked out of their places of hiding to face the U.S. judicial system, or they will face summary justice at the wrong end of U.S. missiles and bombs. And then, another gem from the President's speech-writer, that the Taliban must act and act immediately, either hand over the terrorists or share in their fate, is little else than a threat that carpet-bombing of an entire people would be the inevitable consequence of the government's failure to accede to U.S. demands. Perhaps more ominous is the explicit threat handed out to the world: "Every nation in every region now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbour or support terrorism will be regarded as a hostile regime."

It is learnt that combat search-and-rescue teams have been stationed in Central Asia, particularly in Uzbekistan which has pledged cooperation, and Tajikistan, which is a more reluctant ally. Ground troops and personnel of the special operations groups of the U.S. Marine Corps and the British

Special Air Services (SAS) are also believed to have been deployed in large numbers in the neighbourhood, though it is not clear yet that Pakistan has provided an operational base. Military forces in the West Asian theatre have been augmented and partly redeployed towards Central Asian bases. Naval fleets in the Gulf are being moved towards Pakistan's offshore waters to bring Afghanistan within striking range of carrier-based aircraft and ship-launched missiles. The British press has already run reports about a plan to be launched in early October, after a phase of saturation aerial bombing, to land commando units at select locations in Afghanistan to snatch bin Laden and eliminate his armed contingents.

In the shell-shocked aftermath of September 11, inevitable parallels were drawn with the attack on Pearl Harbour six decades ago. The sound-alike sound-bytes that were harvested by the mass media seemed to suggest strongly that the U.S. had suffered a grievous attack on account of the freedoms that it guarantees. Sage voices were heard, notably from Democratic Senator Joseph Biden, arguing that to rescind any of the basic civil liberties would be to concede defeat at the very beginning of the long war ahead. But the hastily assembled anti-terrorism Bill that the U.S. administration proposes to put before Congress approves of a broad range of restraints upon the liberties of particular groups, especially immigrants. Further internal convulsions are clearly in store for a society already divided by the debates on social security and taxation. Perhaps what was destroyed above all on September 11 is the myth of America, the myth of freedom and liberty that was propagated on the basis of the denial of these rights to the world's poor by an aggressive militarist posture abroad.

And the realisation that the attack of September 11 constituted a declaration of war is surely a belated awakening for a nation that has been at war with the world almost without break for over half a century.

(Frontline, Oct. 12, 2001)

America's Frankenstein

Praveen Swami

Two decades after it reinvented Jihad as an instrument of foreign policy, the war financed by the U.S. rebounds on itself.

... *Without full U.S. support, the Jihad did not, and still cannot, succeed.*"

—Brigadier Mohammad Yousaf

Commander of Inter-Services Intelligence operations
in Afghanistan, 1983–1987

“Every nation in every region,” U.S. President George Bush told a joint session of Congress on September 20, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists.” What he omitted to mention was that most of the terrorists he was referring to wear manufactured-in-the-USA labels.

Two decades after it reinvented *Jihad* as an instrument of foreign policy, the holy war financed by the United States of America has rebounded on itself. But much of Asia has been suffering since the early 1980s what U.S. intelligence describes as “blowback.” There were 58,000 (U.S. citizens) dead in Vietnam, and we owe the Russians one,” Congressman Charles Wilson told *The Daily Telegraph* in January 1985. Some 1,600 people died during the Khalistan insurgency in Punjab, assigned to secure Pakistan’s eastern border in the course of its Afghanistan campaign. Almost another 20,000 have died inammu and Kashmir, many of them at the hands of organisations created and financed by the U.S. Millions of others have been killed or displaced in Bosnia, Chechnya, Lebanon, and of course Afghanistan.

How did this welter of bloody wars come about? In 1979, resistance led by rural religious leaders to the socialist

Afghan government's decision to make education mandatory for women provided U.S. intelligence with the opportunity it had been seeking. The profoundly reactionary Mujahideen fighting the socialist government, and the Soviet troops which had arrived to support it, were to spearhead the U.S. campaign to avenge its defeat in Vietnam. The operation was put together by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the head of the Saudi Arabian intelligence services Prince Faisal bin Turki, and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). The CIA and the Saudis were to share the expenses of the campaign; the CIA was to provide technical inputs to the ISI, which in turn was to train and commit personnel to advise the Mujahideen.

In 1983, hundreds of U.S. Marines and French paratroopers were killed when their barracks were bombed by a radical, Iran-backed Shia group. From here on, the campaign in Afghanistan acquired a larger strategic meaning. Far Right Sunni forces were assiduously encouraged in an effort to create a counterweight to the forces backed by Iran. From late 1984 many activists from Far Right organisations in West Asia, often dissidents in their own countries, were drawn to the *Jihad* in Afghanistan. Osama bin Laden, a construction industry magnate and a billionaire from Saudi Arabia, emerged as a key figure in organising this flow of cadre. On reaching Peshawar the recruits were put under the Mektab-ul-Khidmat (office of assistance), run by one of bin Laden's closest aides, Abdallah Azam. Throughout this period, Laden interacted closely with both the CIA and the ISI.

U.S. officials knew just what impact the huge flow of Arab funds to these groups was having, but they chose to look the other way. As Brigadier Mohammad Yousaf and Marl Adkin have noted in their book, *The Bear Trap: Afghanistan's Untold Story*, the massive diversion of CIA funds meant that "it was largely Arab money that saved the system." "By this," the authors wrote, "I mean cash from rich individuals or private

rganisations in the Arab world, not Saudi Government funds. Without these extra millions, the flow of arms actually getting to the Mujahideen would have been cut to a trickle." "The problem," the authors continued, "was that it all went to the more fundamentalist parties, not the moderates. This meant that the moderates became proportionately less efficient." Bin Laden himself left Afghanistan for Sudan in 1991, seeking to expand the work he had been doing there. Expelled five years later under U.S. pressure, he returned to Afghanistan, where those he had cultivated on the extreme Right were now well-entrenched in power. In time, the Saudi billionaire dissident would become a key ideological mentor of the Taliban's supreme leader, Mohammad Omar.

India began to feel the heat well before the end of the Afghan war. From 1984 to 1987, the ISI and the CIA began to coordinate a series of Mujahideen attacks across the Amu Darya river, inside the Soviet Union. Barges, fuel depots and industrial installations were hit during the course of these operations. Fearing Soviet military reprisals, possibly backed by India, Pakistan's military ruler General Zia-ul-Haq stepped up support for Khalistan insurgents in Punjab. The idea was to keep Indian troops on this sensitive frontier tied down in the event of a war. Much of the weaponry used by the Khalistan errorists was diverted from supplies intended for the Mujahideen, while their cadre were directly trained by ISI officers. The U.S. chose not to pay attention to the carnage in Punjab, treating the operation as an acceptable part of its larger objectives in Asia.

With the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan in February 1989, the U.S. lost interest in its war-time recruits. Events, however, were soon to pit the one-time allies against each other. The Gulf War of 1991, and the U.S. support of Israeli repression of the Palestinian *intifada*, led the Islamic Right to accuse the U.S. of waging a war against

Muslims. The U.S. and Pakistan attempted to control the fallout by abandoning their long-standing ally Gulbudding Hekmatya after he supported Saddam Hussain, and backing the Taliban instead. The forces unleashed were, however, not so easily controlled. When the Al-Khobar Towers, housing U.S. troops in Dhahran, were bombed in June 1996, U.S. intelligence at first refused to believe that bin Laden was involved, and blamed Iran. However, all doubts were later laid to rest. Although Pakistan and the U.S. backed the Taliban, it had now snapped the leash.

(Frontline, Oct. 12, 2001)

The Split Screen Syndrome

Freedom of speech, it seems, is limited to when it serves US interests only – as Al Jazeera shows

It was one of the oddest phone calls ever made, US Secretary of State Colin Powell phoned the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, to ask for some censorship of the Al Jazeera Satellite TV channel which has had exclusive access to Osama bin Laden and his men. The Emir politely declined, denying media freedom to the American leader. It's not every day that a Sheikh can remind an American leader of their First Amendment to the Constitution.

The Americans lost that half of the fight, but partially won the other. The bosses of all the major network channels in the US agreed last week to resist full and free broadcast of bin Laden's views. The reason proffered was that he could be sending coded messages through his speeches. Bin Laden will be silenced now in America but not across the Islamic world. That presents a major battle to the US-UK alliance against terrorism. Both US President George Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair have said they will open new PR front to all people in the Islamic world that they're not so bad after all. I'm amazed that there's such misunderstanding of what our country is about, that people hate us," said Bush. "I just can't believe it. Because I know how good we are and we've got to do a better job of making our case."

Blair earlier said much the same. "We need to upgrade our media and public opinion operations in the Arab and Muslim world," he said. And went to do an aggressive interview on Al Jazeera to make his point. Bush has been invited for the interview now, and the White House is considering that request.

The world of television has changed dramatically – and hypocritically – since the Gulf War. When CNN boasted its

access to President Saddam Hussein and Iraqis, it was serious scooping. When Al Jazeera does it with another bad guy, it is the promotion of terrorism and must be banned. In that divide in the TV world, either you have the story, or you have the morality. CNN and the rest have been left with sermons while Al Jazeera becomes the most talked about channel in the world. CNN is a beggar for its footage, like the rest of the also-rans.

The network bosses in the US have agreed to watch Al Jazeera footage carefully before they air it. The censorious West will now find that it might have to phone friends in the Arab world to find out the other side of the story. If Blair and Bush want to win the propaganda war in the Arab world, they could have made a worse start than encouraging censorship of Al Jazeera.

(Outlook, Oct. 22, 2001)

When the Moon Landed in America

Pankaj Mishra

Two months ago, as I was about to board a Eurostar train to Paris from Waterloo station, London, I was stopped, taken to a room with dark windows, and questioned by a man in plainclothes from the metropolitan police's anti-terrorist squad. He was courteous, at least until he discovered the visas for Pakistan and Afghanistan. There was an odd excitement in his eyes when he looked up and began an increasing aggressive interrogation. I told him that I was a writer and had gone to these countries on behalf of an American paper. It seemed hard for him to believe me. He kept asking me about whether I had met anyone close to Osama bin Laden, whether I knew any Islamic extremists, and my truthful answer only seemed to work him up into a kind of frenzy.

Minutes passed. I told him that I had a train to catch. I felt the contempt in his voice when he said he had to check me against certain profiles of potential terrorists he had. I resented his tone, but at the same time felt nervous and almost guilty of some unremembered misdemeanour. Luckily, I had the idea of asking him to check my name on the websites of some newspapers. I don't know whether he did or not when he went away briefly. But he looked subdued, if unapologetic, when he returned.

With only a few seconds remaining, I ran to my coach. I seated myself and then discovered that my hands were shaking. I looked around. The other passengers – French, returning, I later learnt, from protesting against the decision by Mark and Spencer's to close their outlets in Paris – seemed to be staring at me. I turned towards the window and saw a dark-skinned man with a quasi-Muslim beard. I looked away. The white people were still staring. I opened *The Guardian* and saw strings of meaningless words. In just a few minutes, something had profoundly distorted my relationship with the world.

The moment passed. In the merciful light of Paris, the world became neutral and manageable again. And it was interesting to think later that just a few weeks before I had been seen as a representative of the powerful West by radical Islamists in Pakistan and Afghanistan. It barely mattered to them that I was, in one sense, the worst kind of infidel: a Hindu by birth and Indian by nationality. And they did not much trouble about Kashmir. The important thing for them was that I had travelled from England, and I was writing for an American paper. And so the phone calls I made were swiftly returned. Doors normally shut to local journalists opened easily, people were courteous and frank.

In squalid madrassas, where the Taliban had been giving the most rudimentary Islamic education, and where another generation prepared themselves for Jihad, men spoke calmly how the oppressed Muslims of the world had come together to destroy one superpower – the Soviet Union – and would, with the grace of God, also take care of America and Israel if they did not relent in their persecution of Muslims. This was the message they expected me to take back to the West.

I went to an international conference of radical Islamists near the border with Afghanistan, where 2,00,000 men – many of them from North Africa, the Middle-East, and Central Asia – listened to speeches on similar themes. The atmosphere was a medieval desert fair: men walking urgently around the sprawling township of tents under a vast cloud of dust, past the stalls selling beautifully illustrated copies of the Quran in Urdu and Arabic, along with posters of Osama bin Laden, clearly the star of the event. On the first day, a ferocious dust storm blew off some of the tents. The white salwar-kameezes of the men flapped in the wind as they ran out from under the swaying tents; the new Afghan rugs lost their bright colour and blended into the dust white ground. But the speeches remained fierce. One speaker after speaker urged Muslims to join the Jihad against the US and its allies.

It took me some time to sort out my own responses to all this. I knew about the corruptions of Jihad; of the leaders grown fat on generous donations from foreign and local

patrons, sending young men to poorly paid *shahadat* (martyrdom) in Kashmir and Afghanistan. But I hadn't been prepared to be moved by the casual sight in one madrassa of six young men sleeping on tattered sheets; I hadn't thought I would be pained to think of the human waste they represented – the young men, whose ancestors had once built one of the greatest civilisations of the world, and who lived in dysfunctional societies, under governments beholden to, or in fear of, America.

My own feeling for America had developed over many visits. It was separate from the fact that I wrote for American papers, that the country's marginal but robust intellectual life – given so little due in the knee-jerk denunciations of American culture – had made possible for me to sustain a career as a writer. No, it was something else. I felt it as a ridiculous pang in my heart as the plane banked for final approach at JFK and the towers of the city at the edge of the vast entranced continent rose serenely into view. I felt it again, as nostalgia, after I was thousands of miles away from America. I began to put complex contradictory words to it only after I read John Updike, longing, while he was lonely in London in 1969, for America, and wondering about the extraordinary civilisation the "last new race" in the world had created, about "the breezy big kitchens, and the lawns burnt brown by August, and the wirling sprinklers and fainting skies, and the cracked tender terrible confident emptiness of it all."

It was easy to denounce that vision of endless space and well-being and leisure as a deception; to speak of the dirty work of empire-building and empire-maintenance, the ruthless suppression of remote and near enemies, that went on behind it. But it remained seductive, particularly so to those of us from struggling tormented societies, even when you had, like me, no plans to live in the US. Here was a country whose nation-building traumas seemed to lie in the remote past, where a widely-shared affluence appeared to have taken care of the social and economic disparities that complicated our lives elsewhere.

And it was this frail fantasy of America as an untainted almost Arcadian realm that I selfishly mourned when I heard the news in the Himalayan village that has been a part-time home to me for many years. I had no TV or radio near me, and horrible images arose in my mind, images that seemed to have accumulated over the last twenty years of relentlessly bad news from Punjab and Kashmir. But such was the imaginative dissonance between Manhattan and the Kashmir valley that they obscured at first what I struggled to articulate to myself: that the brutality of the world I had grown up in – the tens of thousands of murders and hundreds of suicide attacks on individuals and institutions – had come to America, and, in the process, had irrevocably altered the hierarchies of the world.

On the last pages of V.S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* the Indian narrator, untouched so far by the violence of his African country, is told to get out fast by an African official: "One day they'll rough you up and then they'll discover that you are like everybody else and then very bad things will happen to you." Whatever else happened now, I felt, the attack on the WTC and Pentagon had made America appear – and all appearances are all – mortal and vulnerable; had destroyed its formidable aura of a superpower, which America could never regain, no matter how many fighter jets were scrambled into the air, or naval fleets positioned in the Gulf, or ominous plans drawn up for 'ending' hostile states.

It was terrifyingly easy to guess at the responses of the Jihadis I had met in Pakistan and Afghanistan. How fast they would have moved from their sense of besiegement and impotence – of which I had an intimation at Waterloo station when a resentment against the West and its harsh arrangements had stirred even within my privileged being – to exultation at the sight of fewer than two dozen motivated and patient Muslims bringing a rich and proud superpower to its knees. How drunk they, and all other enemies of America – known and unknown, well-deserved or not – would be on their new sense of power.

Something terrible lay in this discovery of America's vulnerability. But equally appalling revelations awaited me in

ie next few days as I received anguished e-mails and phone calls from friends in America – people distressed by not only the destruction of innocent but also the vicious revenge that was now being sought for it. From what they told me, retaliation – swift and cruel – was already in the air. The dogs of nationalism and war had begun to bark all across America.

As I write, a week after the attacks, no evidence directly implicating bin Laden as either the sponsor or mastermind of the attacks has emerged. What little detail is available at present links the hijackers most inconveniently to Saudi Arabia and Egypt: two Middle-Eastern countries with repressive America-backed régimes, and strong if ruthlessly persecuted Islamists opponents. Nevertheless, President George Bush now seems ready to put on – and, by the time you read this, may have already set off – a spectacular display of America's war machinery against the lifeless background of Afghanistan, which might be bombed into the Stone Age, a condition that country has almost achieved, partly through a previous involvement with America in the days of the Cold War.

But then, what? The most frightening possibility is an Islamist backlash in Pakistan. The Bush administration opposes their country will be safely out of the mess in South Asia, after having reached its aim, which, when you discount the moralising and geopolitical claptrap, is simply this: to make the world see that the American military will always have the upper hand over the likes of bin Laden when it comes to violence and destruction. Or perhaps American troops are expected to be around forever to deter future enemies, whom the *Chicago Tribune* warns that "life is long, we are not finished, they must feel the terror": the kind of rhetoric which has stultified even responsible sections of the American media, and which is only some banal machismo, for people like bin Laden feel no terror, and what is also depressingly true is that thousands await to take their place – the thousands who now have a clearer idea of the damage they are capable of inflicting by the simplest of means.

It probably appears disingenuous now to be outraged by the morality of US leaders, and the lynch-mob rage they

currently stoke across the country. All of America's wars in the last half-century have been conducted far from home, and more recently, from 30,000 feet up in the air. A country so well shielded from the mass tragedy and trauma almost all other nations have experienced could only have a complacent and largely unexamined collective life. And, after all, it was America's lack of a rigorous self-awareness, its sensuous self-absorption that had beguiled so many of us.

It is what now strikes hardest at all of us who have been half in love with the country, and who, half turning away from even while deploring, the always visible corruptions of empire had secretly poured our shy bumbling affection on its major illusions: on an unselfconscious vitality that now reveals itself as ignorance, quickly combusted into a xenophobic fury, and on a dreamy innocence that was not of this world, could not live long, and it seems increasingly, had no right to exist.

In the last few days, the abyss between America and the rest of the world that many of us bridged with private fantasy has grown even wider. I had a sense of this when I watched the images of the burning and collapsing towers on a small grainy black and white screen, in a daily-wage labourer's tin shack deep in the valley below my cottage. Around me swarmed a large family, busy cooking a meagre meal over a kerosene stove in one corner. They weren't sure why I, the well-off seeming man in the big cottage, was present in their cramped dingy quarters, watching something they had seen and forgotten about. The labourer stood behind me. Once he said his quiet voice almost drowned out by the excited commentary but chilling in its heart-felt conviction, "*Yeh sab Bhagwan ki marzi hai* (this is all God's will)," and for an extraordinarily lucid second I saw what he meant on the screen, where the mighty towers erected by man in defiance of nature were being brought down to earth, by a power which, though quite mortal itself and made devastating only by modern technology suddenly appeared, in the scale of what it had achieved, to have been abetted by a malevolent divinity.

It was a profoundly disturbing moment, in all of its reminders of our not so common humanity. I knew then that the

more widespread and morally ambiguous response to the event could never be captured on TV cameras, could barely be expressed in words: that it probably lay buried in the hearts of millions of humiliated peoples around the world; and not just those who have felt the malign hand of American foreign and economic policy in their lives, but all those who have been excluded from the banquets of the 'free world', condemned to centuries of deprivation by the injustices of history. These are people in whom the sight of the collapsing towers did not so much induce shock and horror, or a craving for bloody revenge, as a great awe, and a bitter smug shrug at how the arbitrary cruelty and pain they have long lived with had caught up with the most privileged people, and the most magnificent city, in the world....

(*Outlook*, Oct. 1, 2001)

Parochial interests and oil will pollute the 'anti-terrorist' fight

Our Freedom, Their Terror

Praful Bidwai

As the crescendo of war-drums build up, many of us slip into selective amnesia. Four such lapses are important. First, a mere metaphor – ‘war’, used to describe the September 11 barbarism – is being turned into a literal, legal proposition to claim an unlimited right to ‘self-defence’. ‘Self-defence’ against armed attack is the sole ground on which the United Nations Charter (Article 51) permits a State to use armed force without the Security Council’s authorisation. But that too is subject to the State’s obligation to ‘immediately’ report to the Council. It does ‘not in any way affect the Council’s ‘authority’ and ‘responsibility’ to take whatever measures ‘it deems necessary’ for international peace and security, including limiting/terminating the military action.

However, the US and its allies are behaving as if they already had blanket Security Council authorisation to use force however and wherever they please – not just against States, but against that diffuse, near-intangible target, ‘terrorism’, including Bin Laden, Taliban, Hizbollah, and various networks in numerous countries. In reality, various pre-September 11 resolutions (e.g. 1267 of 1998, and 1333 of 1999) demand that the Taliban stop providing sanctuary and training to terrorists, and turn over Bin Laden for trial for the August 1998 bombing of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, on pain of removal. Resolution 1368 (September 12) only calls upon “all States to work together urgently *to bring to justice* the perpetrators, organisers and sponsors” of the latest carnage.

For many people, ‘bringing to justice’ does not mean war in the first instance. A Gallup poll finds that a clear majority of West Europeans (67 to 86 per cent) prefer extradition and trial to outright military attacks (favoured by 12 to 29 per cent) or ‘hunting down’ suspects. That’s how it

should be under a civilised, as distinct from a Wild West "Wanted-Dead-or-Alive", approach. But we are forgetting that means other than, and supplementing, war are possible, and that use of force can't be disproportionate or unlimited.

A second instance of amnesia lies in forgetting how ineffectual many recent wars have been in attaining their stated goals – despite their horrifying destructiveness. More than 10 years after Iraq was pulverised – at the expense of \$79 billion – back to the Stone Age, and after 1.2 million civilians have perished under egregious sanctions, Saddam Hussein still remains in power. The trauma of war, humiliating inspections (without limitations in time or space), bans on Iraq's sole export, and measures to starve it of food and medicine, has left the entire Gulf region seething with discontent, the Kurdish question unresolved and democratisation or stability only remote possibilities.

Again, NATO's Kosovo intervention probably killed many more civilians than troops while destroying dummy cardboard tanks and leaving most Serbian armour intact. But it didn't remove Milosevic from power – only an election did – or adequately protect the minorities (although it signalled opposition to ethnocide).

Bosnia is a terrible story of devious external interference, sharpening ethnic divisions, European pusillanimity and abuse of force. The East Timor atrocities happened under an Indonesian regime armed to the teeth by the US. But raw military power couldn't prevent East Timor's independence.

Even when major powers intervene militaristically in 'noble' causes, things can go disastrously wrong. Take 'Plan Colombia', devised by the US to wage another 'war' – chemical and biological – on drugs. Over the past decade, use of herbicides, killer spores and fungi on 300,000 hectares has destroyed peasant livelihoods, displaced millions, deforested land, poisoned the environment, thus causing extreme misery to escape which people are forced to cultivate more drugs. Cocaine cultivation has tripled in a decade as society got militarised.

nd democracy decayed under this new 'war' – refuelling the old violence.

This is not to argue against international intervention, save alone for absolute national sovereignty, but only against the blind socially emptied, callous and arrogant frameworks of intervention, which mindlessly rely on maximal force, but reject principled diplomacy and legal or social remedies.

A third form of amnesia obscures the very definition of terrorism. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines the 'terrorist' as "one who favours or uses" terror inspiring "methods of governing or of coercing government or community". We are being asked to forget the first part of the definition, and by implication, the reality of numerous terrorist governments and governing parties.

Even where 'State terrorism' or State-sponsored terrorism is recognised, it is cheerfully confined to 'cross-border terrorism', synonymous with Pakistan, never extended to other countries, including (randomly), the former colonial powers (with their terrible recent record in Africa and Asia), Russia (Chechnya), China (Tibet), Israel (Palestine), Sri Lanka, Zaire, and above all, the US, which has sponsored and supported more terrorist regimes in the past half-century than any other government. Thus, the Taliban is rightly mentioned as Pakistan's creation and ally, but reference is seldom made to its American parentage, patronage or use as instrument of State policy. Yet going by Ahmed Rashid's *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, the US diabolically encouraged and almost recognised the Taliban, as part of a big pipeline deal.

The fourth kind of amnesia means covering up past wrong-doing by the 'good side in the present confrontation against 'evil', The US record here from Argentina to Zaire, through Angola, Brazil, Cuba, Greece, Iran, Kampuchea and Vietnam, is unspeakably atrocious. So is Pakistan's.

But, to be brutally frank, hardly more defensible is India's own past training and arming of one of the most sadistic groups anywhere (the LTTE): creation of contra-type guerrillas in the North-east and Kashmir: and collusion with the CIA in

the failed Khampa 'insurgency' of the Fifties in Tibet. India could also be accused of having come close to sponsoring 'cross-border terrorism' through client guerrillas in former East Pakistan, and through Baluch and Sindhi nationalists in the Seventies and Eighties. Ultimately, the LTTE returned to haunt us – through Rajiv Gandhi's assassination. But that has provoked little honest introspection.

It won't do to plead "we did this in good faith, for democracy, or in the national interest". Or "we weren't fully aware of the violent consequences". All States proffer similar arguments. Pakistani strategists claim they needed to control Afghanistan for reasons of 'strategic depth' – a bogus doctrine if there ever was one. The US inflicted unspeakable horror upon the people of Afghanistan in the Eighties through the Mujahideen in the 'larger' cause of 'freedom' (read, Cold War victory), and then abandoned them. When it sets out today to defend freedom again, it doesn't appear credible to the world's most impoverished and devastated people.

The fight against terrorism can only succeed if it is focused on the right targets, is conducted soberly and with measured, proportionate force, as part of a comprehensive holistic strategy, including diplomacy and measures to address the root-causes of the discontent that leads to the extreme desperation which breeds terrorism. Insofar as it relies on military force in the short run, it must be based on a high discriminating moral balance (that is, rejecting "you're either with-us-or-against-us" attitudes), on respect for human rights, protection of non-combatants, and on accountability and transparency. That's not the war we are about to witness.

Given its ill-defined objectives, targets and methods, there's no assurance that today's 'anti-terrorism' operation will be a just war waged in just ways and that other realpolitik based considerations won't get padded on to it. The worst of these would be oil and gas. Central Asia has the world's second largest hydrocarbon resources. Afghanistan and its Caspian Basin neighbours hold the key to their control and exploitation. The New Great Game is all about that.

It has already involved players like Exxon, Shell, Inocal, Enron and Mitsubishi, and 'consultants' or supporters like Henry Kissinger, Alexander Haig, Robin Raphael and Richard Armitage (currently deputy secretary of state). Rashid painstakingly documents the collusion between the ISI, the US, Inocal, and the Taliban.

The temptation to play that 'Game', albeit with new alignments, could visit another dark reign upon the people of Afghanistan and destabilise South Asia in ways utterly unconceivable earlier. We stand warned.

(The Hindustan Times, Sept. 28, 2001)

The Story of the Taliban is Over, but...

**The Americans might want the Taliban to continue
in some form in order to justify US presence
in the region – Central Asian oil is the issue.**

Zafar Agha (tehelka)

The story of the Taliban is over. It is now only a caricaturised version of the Taliban that is essentially serving the American purpose. The fact of the matter, though, is that the Taliban turned out to be the biggest hoax of the 21st century. After September 11, they managed to not only shock the world, but also create the impression that they could give the US military a run for their money. But, in less than five weeks after the US reprisals on Afghanistan, a whimpering Taliban vacated Kabul.

Remember Osama bin Laden's first cassette aired on Al Jazeera, telling the world, "Unless there is peace in Palestine, there cannot be peace in America?" That cold-blooded, calm threat from bin Laden took the world for a ride. Experts believed that the Afghan war would be a long and bloody haul. Never in history have the ferocious Afghans been defeated. All sorts of theories about the Taliban and Osama bin Laden were addled – that he was armed with nuclear suitcase bombs; that he could hit any American target any time.

The poor Americans, scared of anthrax, would not even touch their mail. Entrepreneurs cashed in on the fear psychosis, selling handy parachutes for office-goers to jump out of buildings, in case a plane hit another American skyscraper.

But five weeks of American bombing destroyed all the might of the Taliban, and the poor Tajiks and Uzbeks of the CIA, after years of patience, finally defeated the Pashtuns. The myth of the Taliban is finally broken.

But what was the strength that sustained the Taliban all these years? Two factors: regular arms supplies from Pakistan

through the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI); and the lack of seriousness of the US administration about dislodging the Taliban. US President George W Bush's key aide Condoleezza Rice was negotiating a deal with the Taliban till as late as June 2, 2001.

The Taliban are essentially a Pakistani front, which the Americans ignored with an eye on their long-term strategic interests.

They were a pompous lot who nursed the ambition to emerge as ideological champions of the Muslim world, based on 19th century rhetoric that they picked up from the conservative Deobandi seminaries of Pakistan. Taught by the conservative mullahs and armed to the teeth by the Pakistani establishment, the Taliban started seriously believing that they had become invincible and that their mentor, Osama bin Laden, could swing the support of millions of Muslim Jihadis in any time if the US attacked them.

The medieval-minded Taliban could not understand that the Americans were playing a game with them. The Americans allowed the Taliban to play terrorist. Finally, when the World Trade Center (WTC) and the Pentagon were attacked, President Bush seized the opportunity that the American establishment had been looking forward to ever since the Soviet Union had crashed. The Americans wanted to grab the Central Asian oil bonanza. They wanted to bring it to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean through a pipeline from Afghanistan. But, in that, the US needed a big military presence in the region.

The US now has bases in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and already has an airbase in Pakistan. Its forces are stationed in Afghanistan. The Bagram airport is the first transport facility that the Americans have organised for themselves and other Western allies to camp in Afghanistan and protect all American oil interests in Central Asia, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The outwitted Taliban walked into the same trap that Saddam Hussein had in the West Asian and Gulf region. Very much like the Taliban, the Americans let Saddam Hussein live in a fools' paradise believing that he could capture Kuwait and become another Gamal Abdel Nasser, the hero of all W

sian Muslims from the 1950s to the 1970s. The Taliban nilarly assumed that attacking the US would overnight nsform them into the heroes of the Muslim ummah nternational Muslim community). And perhaps the US let em go ahead with their silly notion.

But the Taliban is now running for the cover as mericans have told their mentor, Pakistan, to block all nitions. The Central Asian oil and other rich resources are ow well within the reach of American multinational rporations (MNCs), with the US army spread all across the gion with bases in almost every key country of the region.

So the resistance at Kunduz and Kandhar are a part of e game. Perhaps, like in the case of Saddam Hussein, the mericans would not like the Taliban to die. Some sort of reat from the Taliban would be in America's interests. After l, the US needs the terrorist bogey to justify its presence in e Central Asian region. The Americans would now like to use e Taliban the way they are using Saddam Hussein as a mbol of terrorism in the oil-rich Gulf region. They will need e Taliban in the Central Asian region to keep their troops ationed there, in Afghanistan and in Pakistan to supervise an ninterrupted oil flow from the region. You may still have a ricaturised version of the Taliban holding out in certain ockets of Afghanistan.

The surviving Taliban might, off and on even issue reats to America so that the Americans can justify their stay Afghanistan. After all, Bush Senior had let American troops ationed close to Mecca, the nerve of the West Asian oil flow. ow Bush Junior will ensure the oil flow from the Central sian region.

(*Milli Gazette*, Dec. 16-31, 2001)

Expert Claims Oil Interests Ruined US-Taliban Talks

Guillaume Dasquie

Protecting the interests of U.S. oil giant led the United States to misunderstand the complex situation in Afghanistan and eventually caused negotiations with the Taliban regime over Osama bin Laden to collapse, according to a book published in France earlier this month.

Guillaume Dasquie, an investigative journalist and coauthor of the book, *Bin Laden: The Forbidden Truth*, explained to The Yomiuri Shimbun how U.S. officials antagonized the Taliban regime in a year-long dialogue by uncompromisingly calling on the Taliban to give up power and Osama bin Laden. Jean Serron (Yomiuri Shimbun Paris bureau) interviewed Dasquie recently in Paris.

Yomiuri Shimbun: How do you assess the influence of the oil industry on the George W. Bush administration's policy in Afghanistan?

Dasquie: Although we have no direct evidence on how oil companies interfered in U.S. diplomacy, a basic element must be taken into account: Oil companies were the main contributors to George W. Bush's presidential campaign, and key persons in his administration have come from the oil industry. For instance, Condoleezza Rice, his national security adviser, is a former director for Chevron, where notably, she was in charge of Kazakh affairs.

During the negotiations that started soon after Bush's presidential inauguration, it became clear that his administration's first priority was the control of the Afghan ruling regime, not the bin Laden issue. At that time, the United States expected the Al-Qaida leader would be tried in Saudi Arabia because if he was extradited to the United States it would lead to riots among the people of Muslim countries.

The U.S. officials were in contact with the Taliban through Laila Helms, niece of former Central Intelligence Agency Director Richard Helms, and an unofficial Taliban representative in Washington. At the same time, in a two-pronged policy, the United States pressed for sanctions in the United Nations, whose special envoy Francesco Vendrell had regular talks with the Afghan factions in the frame of the so-called six-plus-two group – Afghanistan's neighbours plus the United States and Russia. The U.S. administration hoped the U.N. process would lead the Taliban to present a more acceptable face to the international scene. That is why they supported Vendrell's contacts with the exiled former King Zahir Shah, which date back to April, long before the current crisis.

Why do you believe there is a link between these negotiations and the Sept. 11 bombings?

The U.S. officials sent a strong message to the Taliban: "Share power with the king and expel bin Laden." This only pushed the Taliban to radicalise its attitude. U.S. policy-makers proved irresponsibly blind. They did not understand how strongly bin Laden was tied politically with Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar. Furthermore, the U.S. administration had envisioned a military solution in Afghanistan, and they made it clear to the Taliban officials at some point in the talks.

So, the Sept. 11 attacks can be seen as Al-Qaida's response to U.S. blindness. Al-Qaida had nothing to win from the Afghanistan-U.S. talks and needed to drive the Taliban toward a holy war against the United States. Al-Qaida had no interest in the political process. They aimed only at cutting short the negotiations and cementing the Muslims against the Western world.

According to your investigations, the U.S. administration started negotiations with Taliban more than a year before the Sept. 11 attack. What were the purposes of the talks?

In 1993-94, Western countries began to realize the importance of energy resources in the soil of Central Asia.

countries, particularly Kazakhstan. They became more aware of the situation in Afghanistan, which has always been regarded as a key to control the region.

Seeking a strong regime in Afghanistan, the Western countries had Saudi Arabia, a country of Sunni influence like Afghanistan, choose from among the Pashtun, Afghanistan's main ethnic group, those who could seize power after years of civil war. That is why the Taliban emerged, with the help of funds provided by the U.S. and Saudi oil giants – Unocal and Delta Oil. Talks between the United States and the Taliban started cautiously under the Clinton administration. But the tone of the talks became different with the Bush administration.

(From *Net News*, Dec. 31, 2001)
(*Milli Gazette*, Dec. 16–31, 2001)

The Clash of Civilizations a Questionable Thesis

Syed Arif Hussaini

As the war in Afghanistan nears the end of its shooting phase, questions are being raised afresh on the validity of the thesis of Harvard professor, Samuel Huntington, on the inevitability of a clash between the Muslim civilization of the East and the Christian civilization of the West.

Osama Bin Laden's call to Muslim countries to rise in a holy war (Jihad) against America, appeared to provoke such a rash and provide substance to Huntington's contention. Theawks, jingoists, pro-Israel lobbyists and media-men started quoting like scripture his 1996 book on the subject, betraying an underlying wish for the fulfilment of his prediction. The more the Muslim States are hamstrung, it was perhaps felt, the less likely would be their support to Palestine. The US being the sole super-power, the time was perhaps considered opportune by these tendentious hawks to expand the battlefield to include Iraq and other oil-rich countries of the region. The thrax-bearing letters appear to goad the administration's attention to the units in Iraq suspected of producing chemical and biological weapons.

Developments on the ground have, however, negated a confrontation between the Muslim and Christian civilisations. Almost all Muslim countries have condemned the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, joined the US-led coalition, and offered assistance to the campaign. The Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) and the Arab League have also endorsed the campaign against terrorism.

Osama's call for a Jihad has been ignored with contempt. It did however stir emotionally some bigots belonging to the lunatic fringe. These ill-equipped volunteerselled the rag-tag Taliban ranks to commit aimless suicide.

The Taliban have deserted several fronts to dissolve into civilian population. Some have defected to the Northern

Alliance. Fifteen thousand Taliban, Arabs, Pakistanis, Chechens, others remain surrounded in Kunduz city in northern Afghanistan. Negotiations continue between the US-backed Northern Alliance and the Taliban on the terms of surrender.

That is the situation at the time of writing (Nov. 23). It would be appropriate now to take a look at Huntington's thesis.

It is my hypothesis, he writes, that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.

Almost all prominent world historians have sought cogent patterns in the rise and fall of nations and international relations. The first such study was made by Ibn Khaldun in his work called *Maqaddima* – Introduction. He found the inherent cohesion and strength of a nation, which he called *asabiyyah*, to be the deciding factor. The rise and fall of a nation is conditioned by the curve of its *asabiyyah*.

Numerous Arab, Persian and Western historians have viewed the phenomenon from various angles. Among the last, Francis Fukuyama thought that with the demise of the Soviet Union, history itself had come to an end as ideological conflict had ended. Samuel Huntington disagreed, contending that the conflict between the Western and Islamic civilizations was still building up. Civilizations, he maintains, are differentiated from each other by history, language, culture, tradition and, most important, religion.

Interaction of peoples of different civilizations enhances the differences and does not decrease them. The victory of liberal democracy over communism ended ideology-based conflict. Civilization-based groupings of states are filling the vacuum and maintaining it.

Huntington's thesis is vastly flawed. Conflicts are not rooted in civilizational differences. Contacts between different civilizations have not always embittered relations. They have often contributed to positive development and a cross-fertilization of ideas and knowledge.

The advent of information technology, the internet in particular, and the 1996 formation of World Trade Organisation adding to globalisation of world economy, the lowering of customs barriers, have set in fast motion the development of a world civilization. Cultural differences are conceding place to uniform cultural values.

Over the past two-three years, I have travelled to India, Malaysia, Arabia, Turkey, and Mexico. I found everywhere the same blue jeans, T-shirts, joggers, and fast food chains serving burgers, fried chicken, French-fries, and pizzas. In urban areas you find a lot of men and women using mobile phones. Internet cafes are available within walking distance of each other. Currency changers are similarly available in all countries and you can receive or remit money anywhere within minutes. Your credit card works in most foreign countries. More and more people speak English as a secondary language, and American dollar serves as the world currency.

The world cultural scene has thus undergone a change over the past decade or two in a fundamental way.

The clashes of civilizations, if you prefer to call them as such, ended with the end of imperialism in the mid-twentieth century. The modern industrial and technological civilization puts a premium on rationality, science and technology, control of environment, sharing of knowledge and of innovations. Among its salient feature is also a high degree of tolerance for individual's religious beliefs.

Empires and nation states have in the past also exploited religious sentiments to promote their temporal interests. Some historians have even suggested that the economic need for easier access to the spices of Asia, to serve as preservatives in food products of Europe, was the hidden motive behind the expeditions.

Vasco de Gama's voyage to India via the circuitous route of Cape of Good Hope, and Columbus arrival in America in search of India, were certainly meant to finesse the Ottoman's control over the Mediterranean as a Turkish lake. These ventures had little to do with Islam or Christianity. The discoveries of the new trade routes marked the beginning of the decline of the Ottoman empire, by gradually shrinking its revenues

from the Mediterranean trade, particularly from the custom and transportation charges at Suez.

Similarly, WW1 and WW2 were both fought for overseas markets by Germany and its allies who had been left behind in the scramble for colonies – the captive markets of Asia and Africa.

In the 1850s when Christianity had deeper roots in the hearts of Europe, temporal interests dictated France and Britain to support the Muslim Turkish empire against the Christian Russia. At the present time Georgia, an orthodox Christian state of the Caucasus, finds it easier to have meaningful relations with its Muslim neighbor Azerbaijan than with its co-religionist Armenia. Turkey has firmer relations with Israel than with some of its Muslim neighbors.

Islam urges its followers to not only respect the followers of the other two revealed religions, Christianity and Judaism, but also to protect them like their own kith and kin. The Jews of the days gone by thrived in the Muslim rule in Spain, Ottoman rule in Turkey and Safavid Empire of Iran.

The territorial conflict between Israel and Palestine has been given a religious twist to gain political and material support. Osama took advantage of the conflict to build his cadre of terrorists. Huntington's erudition has unfortunately led him to his thesis on the clash of Muslim and Christian civilization. Both, I submit, are wrong.

Events have proved Osama's call unsupportable. Huntington's thesis has been countered by many of the academic community. Given the current trends, religion is likely to play only a marginal role in any future world conflict.

Perhaps Prof. Northcote Parkinson has made a more rational assessment of world trends in his book *East & West* in which he presents the cyclical theory of world dominance and contends that the next clash will likely be between the West led by the US and the East by China. His book was published decades before the collapse of the Soviet Union when it was still referred to as the East (*mediamonitors*).

(*Milli Gazette*, Dec. 16–31, 2001)

*The future of Afghanistan should lie at the root of
Western political thinking*
Beyond Bin Laden

*Fred Halliday**

Events of the past week have underlined both the importance and pitfalls that beset discussion of international affairs. All areas of political and social life involve controversy and commitment: this is as true of debates on the family, the role of the State in the economy, education and the causes of crime. But in no area of public discussion is there as high a dose of posturing, misinformation and irrationality as that of international issues.

There are, in broad terms, two conventional stances that arise in regard to international issues – complacency disguised as realism and irresponsibility posing as conscience. These roles have been evident in regard to the major cases of humanitarian intervention in the Nineties (Kuwait, Bosnia, Kosovo) and are present in much of the debate on the causes of globalisation and world inequality. They are present in very specific form in the question of what can be the future political system in Afghanistan.

For hard-headed realism, the international is a domain of power, mistrust and recurrence of conflict. This is the way the world, or god, or the market make it, and there is not much you can do. The most dangerous people are the do-gooders who make a mess of things by trying to make the world a better place: foreign aid, human rights, a lowering of the security guard, let alone education in global issues, are all doomed to failure.

Last week, in a typical realist calumny, one that allows legitimate international action only to States, President Bush

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cast responsibility for the terror attacks on, among others NGOs he had to spell out that this meant non-governmental organisations'. More ominous are the voices, now pushing a realist agenda that were already under starter's orders on the morning of September 11 and are now in full canton identity cards, immigration controls, National Missile Defence.

In the field of cultural speculation, the great winner has been the theory, first espoused by Samuel Huntington in 1993 that says we are entering an epoch that will be dominated by 'the Clash of Civilisations.'

The alternative view to realism has its own, equally simplistic, answers. This assumes that there is a straightforward, benign way of resolving the world's problem and that there is one, identifiable and single cause of what is wrong. Two centuries ago, the cause was monarchy and absolutism, then branded as the cause of poverty, ignorance and war over the past two centuries, it has been capitalism and imperialism: now it is globalisation. More specifically the US is held responsible for the ills of the world – global inequality, neglect of human rights, militarism, and cultural decay.

It is not always clear what the 'America' so responsible is – this Bush administration, all US administrations, the whole of 'corporate' America. Hollywood or, in the implication of September 11, the whole of the American people and, indeed all who choose to work with, or visit, or in anyway find themselves in the proximity of such people.

Both of these positions are, perhaps, caricatures, yet the themes they encompass are evident, and will be even more evident, in the crisis that has engulfed the world. There are however, some core issues where, perhaps, an element of reason about international affairs may be sustainable.

First, history: much is made of the antecedents. Some involve the Crusades, others *Jehad* but the image of the Crusades means little to those outside the Mediterranean Arab world: *Jehad* is quite an inappropriate term for the proper Quranic, reason that the armies of Islam sought to convert those who were conquered to Islam.

As for the Cold War, it has contributed its mite to this isis and, in particular, to the destruction of Afghanistan but in way that should give comfort to few. One can here suggest a 'no dustbins' theory' of the Cold War legacy of the Soviet stem has left a mass of uncontrolled nuclear, chemical and ological weapons, and unresolved ethnic problems, the West as bequeathed a bevy of murderous gangs, from Unita in ngola to the Mujahideen in Afghanistan.

A second issue that is present is that of culture. It takes o to have a 'Clash of Civilisations' and there are those on oth sides who are using the present conflict to promote it.

Huntington's theory misses what is the most important use of the events of recent days, and which will define the onsequences in the Muslim world of what is to come, namely e enormous clash within the Muslim world between those ho want to reform, and secularise, and those whose power is reatened, or who want to take power in the name of ndamentalism. This has been the basis of the conflicts going r these past decades in Pakistan, Iran, Egypt, Turkey and most olently of all, Afghanistan.

Religious fundamentalists in all societies have one goal: is not to convert other people to their beliefs, but to seize owers – political, social and gendered – within their own ocieties. Their greatest foe is secularism.

The third and, arguable, most important and difficult sue underlying the crisis is that of the most effective and just ay to combine the two instruments of international politics – orce and diplomacy. Under international law, States are entitled o use force in self-defence. An element of retribution is part of ay legal system, domestic or international. The UN is not some acifist, supranational last resort, but a body which, in its charter nd in the Security Council resolution 1368 of September 12, has uthorised military action by States in this case.

At the same time, any use of force, in the immediate uture or in the longer conflict promised by both sides, has to e matched by diplomatic and political initiative. This can ver each of the separate issues that make up the greater West asian crisis underlying these events, from Kashmir to

Palestine, and on to Kosovo, but it must, above all, address the future of Afghanistan itself.

Here, the UN has, since 1993, been on record, and with the support of all the permanent members of the Security Council and all the neighbouring States, in calling for the setting up of a new government. The UN has insisted that this be broadly based, fully representative, multi-ethnic and opposed to terrorism. This is a goal, which the current crisis requires and brings closer to view. It is also one which, it is generally agreed, the great majority of Afghans would support.

Freud once argued that the aim of psychoanalysis was to reduce extreme hysteria to everyday common misery. The function of reasoned argument, and an engaged scepticism, in international affairs is to do just that.

(Guardian News Service, The Hindustan Times, Sept. 25, 2001)

A Real Life Bad Guy in Town

Sanjay Suri (in Washington)

Like so many thousands of others, he went out and bought himself a gun after the attacks on America. The man then went home and hung it up on the curtain rod, over the bed of his three-year-old son. No, he wasn't expecting Osama bin Laden to climb in through the window. He was just doing the tough thing in suburban Virginia, just as they were trying to do in the skies over Afghanistan. Tragically for him, the next morning the toddler shot himself fatally, playing with the gun.

America has its finger on the trigger these days. It's a nation rushing to buy guns, the women and the elderly more than anybody else. Full up, shooting schools are turning away new gun-owners — everyone's praying for at least as much business as the gun dealers. The US has always been the land of stars and stripes, as also guns. The American flag flies everywhere now — on cars, on houses, even on those T-shirts. And it's not in mourning; these are now battle flags of a nation gunning for 'em, whoever they are, wherever they may be; last week, a premier football match was just about to begin when the loudspeakers announced that America was bombing Afghanistan. The match was quickly forgotten. The stadium reverberated with shouts of "USA, USA". In a schoolroom in New York, children were singing "God Bless America". The usually sensible *Washington Post* carried a banner headline two days later: "US Controls Skies, Hunts New Targets." So there was a Taliban Air Force, then? The Americans are more at war in America than in Afghanistan.

Wednesday, last week, we were all ordered to leave our train in downtown Washington and cross over. There had been a gas leak, came the announcement. It later turned out to be a hoax. The pharmacies in Washington have sold out their stocks of ciprofloxacin, an antibiotic that can purportedly fight at least some of what has suddenly become familiar as bio-terrorism.

The gas masks had sold out much earlier. More were ordered these too are selling out. "Can't get 'em fast enough," says store-owner.

The American Red Cross has asked people to store at least three gallons of water per head at home, and to keep 'communication plan' ready. After the air strikes in Afghanistan and the FBI announcement that there was a "100 per cent chance" of more terrorist attacks, Americans are taking more and more emergency measures. Window panes in Capitol Hill have been lined with plastic sheets. Traffic around government buildings has been re-routed. The Bethesda Medical Centre, in a Washington suburb, is now defended like a nuclear installation, for it houses gases that are a bio-terrorist's dream. The fight has come home. America sits on the edge before the TV and waits, it's not sure for who.

It's dangerous, this wait. They should have been in the shopping mall, for God's sake, for America's sake. Last week when a Milwaukee shopkeeper announced that his sale of home improvement kits was going up, it became a matter for national concern. Was it part of a larger malady, the country was asking. *The Christian Science Monitor* worried that it was a sign of Americans spending too much time at home. For what's at America that's not buying and flying?

If there's danger to Washington, it's at the White Flin shopping mall and not at the Medical Centre. "We're just not getting enough people coming in through the door," says shoe store manager at the mall. At a boutique across, an evening dress has been marked down from \$70 to \$15. There were still no buyers. Pollsters have been producing depressing figures by the day but they needn't have bothered. The empty malls said it all.

"At the end of the day, you know, this is the economy of the unnecessary," an old friend with the World Bank told me. "When Americans buy only what is necessary, you know you have a recession." The president, senators, congressmen are all shouting out loud that about the most patriotic thing an American can do these days is to go out and shop. And buy something more than a US flag. Americans must spend for America's sake, they say – but they aren't doing nearly as

much as they need to. Bin Laden or whoever it was did not hit just the WTC, he's hit every trade centre.

Only in the US do schoolkids get formal lessons in shopping. Now all of America is getting lessons; the battle is on to get Americans back to the malls. General Motors is giving away cars on interest-free loans, at cut-rate prices. Interest rates have been cut and cut again, and the last was not the final cut.

America is yearning for the reassuring inanity of its advertisements. Nine out of 10 Americans want ads back on TV as before. The company, Writhlin Worldwide, says most Americans want advertising because it's a sign of normalcy, some say because it's essential to the economy, some to show the terrorists that they can't beat America. To get back at bin Laden, advertise. The sale signs will hit him harder than those wasted missiles. This war will be won or lost less in Afghanistan than in the giant malls of American suburbia.

At least some of the shock that still hovers over Americans comes not from the loss of lives but from knowing that a disaster can happen in America outside of Universal Studios. It was a violation of innocence; of what Americans genuinely feel is innocence. Bush said he was amazed to see the hatred for Americans in Islamic capitals. "I just can't believe it because I know how good we are," he said. Apparently, there is such a thing as the innocent American entirely disconnected from CIA misadventures.

Americans have always known more about Martians than the Mujahideen. It came like an attack from aliens, and in turn America turned on the new aliens at home and outside. Right now, America is holding on to its institutionalised politeness, but just about. Anyone who looks an alien is under surveillance, much of it citizen surveillance. On the streets, in the trains, the eyes say it. That relationship with Martians was innocence; this now is the loss of that innocence too. It means, among other things, no more students from India knocking on the doors of US universities for some time.

The 'Navel-Gazing Years Are Over', said one of those typically introspective headlines of today's US. In those attacks, America lost so many, and with them its 'Disney-ed'

sense of safety. Day after day now there is talk and more talk on TV for a nation tuning into a self-discovery channel bewildered by the blow to its muscular optimism. A people crowded by the sickening truth that this Bad Guy is for real. A people whose lost innocence is leading to a cruel question: how does America become less American?

(Outlook, Oct. 22, 2001)

Another War on Terror Another Proxy Army

Robert Fisk

The eyes of the world are on Afghanistan, but on 28 Nov. a Belgian appeals court considered a case with disturbing contemporary parallels. Robert Fisk of the *Independent* reveals shocking new evidence that the full, horrific story of the Sabra and Shatila massacres of 1982 has not yet been told yet.

New evidence indicates Palestinians died hours after surviving camp massacres Palestinian gunmen go on rampage US peace effort starts Sana Sersawi speaks carefully, loudly but slowly, as she recalls the chaotic, dangerous, desperately tragic events that over 19 years ago, on 18 September 1982. As one of the survivors prepared to testify against the Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon – who was then Israel's defence minister she stops to search her memory when she confronts the most terrible moments of her life. "The Lebanese Forces militia [Phalangists] had taken us from homes and marched us up to the entrance to the camp where a large hole had been dug in the earth. The men were told to get into it. Then the militiamen shot a Palestinian. The women and children had climbed over bodies to reach this spot, but we were truly shocked by seeing this man killed in front of us and there was a roar of shouting and screams from the women. That's when we heard the Israelis on loudspeakers shouting, 'Give us the men, give us the men.' We thought, 'Thank god, they will save us.' It was to prove a cruelly false hope.

Mrs Sersawi, three months pregnant, saw her husband Hassan, 30, and her Egyptian brother-in-law Faraj el-Sayed Ahmed standing in the crowd of men. "We were told to walk up the road towards the Kuwaiti embassy, the women and children in front, the men behind. We had been separated. There were Phalangist militiamen and Israeli soldiers walking

alongside us. I could still see Hassan and Faraj. It was like a parade. There were several hundred of us. When we got to the Cite Sportif, the Israelis put us women in a big concrete room and the men were taken to another side of the stadium. There were a lot of men from the camp and could no longer see their husband. The Israelis went round saying 'Sit, sit.' It was 11 am. An hour later, we were told to leave. But we stood around outside amid the Israeli soldiers, waiting for our men."

Sana Sersawi waited in the bright, sweltering sun for Hassan and Faraj to emerge. "Some men came out, none of them younger than 40, and they told us to be patient, that hundreds of men were still inside. Then about 4 pm, an Israeli officer came out. He was wearing dark glasses and said in Arabic: 'What are you all waiting for? He said there was nobody left, that everyone had gone. There were Israeli trucks moving out with tarpaulin over them. We couldn't see inside. And there were jeeps and tanks and a bulldozer making a lot of noise. We stayed there as it got dark and the Israelis appeared to be leaving and we were very nervous. But then when the Israelis had moved away, we went inside. And there was nobody there. Nobody. I had been only three years married. I never saw my husband again."

In working on this case, the prosecution believes that it has discovered shocking new evidence of Israel's involvement.

The evidence centres on the Camille Chamoun Sports Stadium – the "Cite Sportif". Only two miles from Beirut airport, the damaged stadium was a natural holding centre for prisoners. It had been an ammunition dump for Yasser Arafat's PLO and repeatedly bombed by Israeli jets during the 1982 siege of Beirut so that its giant, smashed exterior looked like a nightmare denture. The Palestinians had earlier mined the cavernous interior, but its vast, under-ground storage space and athletics changing-rooms remained intact. It was a familiar landmark to all of us who lived in Beirut. At mid-morning on 18 September 1982 – about the time Sana Sersawi says she was brought to the stadium – I saw hundreds of Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners, probably well over 1,000, sitting in the gloomy, dark interior, squatting in the dust, watched over by

Israeli soldiers and plain-clothes Shin Beth (Israeli secret service) agents and men who I suspected were Lebanese collaborators. The men sat in silence, obviously in fear. From time to time, I noted, a few were taken away. They were put onto Israeli army trucks or jeeps or Phalangist vehicles – for further “interrogation.”

Nor did I doubt this. A few hundred metres, inside the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian refugee camps, up to 600 massacre victims rotted in the sun, the stench of decomposition drifting over the prisoners and their captors alike. It was suffocatingly hot. Loren Jenkins of *The Washington Post*, Paul Hader of Reuters and I had only got into the cells because the Israelis assumed – given our Western appearance – that we must have been members of Shin Beth. Many of the prisoners had their heads bowed. But Israel’s Phalangist militiamen – still gazing at the murder of their leader and president elect Bashir Gemayel – had been withdrawn from the camps, their slaughter over, and at least the Israeli army was now in charge. So what did these men have to fear?

Looking back – and listening to Sana Sersawi today – I shudder now at our innocence. My notes of the time, subsequently written into a book about Israel’s 1982 invasion and its war with the PLO, contain some ominous clues. We found a Lebanese employee of Reuters, Abdullah Mattar, among the prisoners and obtained his release, Paul leading him away with his arm around the man’s shoulders. “They take us away, one by one, for interrogation,” one of the prisoners uttered to me. “They are Haddad (Christian militia) men: usually they bring the people back after interrogation, but not always. Sometimes the people do not return them.” Then an Israeli officer ordered me to leave. Why couldn’t the prisoners talk to me, I asked? They can talk if they want,” he replied. But they have nothing to say.”

All the Israelis knew what had happened inside the camps. The smell of the corpses was now overpowering. Outside, a Phalangist jeep with the words “Military Police” painted on it – if so exotic an institution could be associated with this gang of murderers – drove by. A few television crews

had turned up. One filmed the Lebanese Christian militiamen outside the Cite Sportif. He also filmed a woman pleading to an Israeli army colonel called "Yahya" for the release of her husband. (The colonel has now been positively identified by the *Independent*. Today, he is a general in the Israeli army.)

Along the main road opposite the stadium there was a line of Israeli Merkava tanks, their crews sitting on the turrets smoking, watching the men being led from the stadium in one or twos, some being set free, others being led away by Shin Bet men or by Lebanese men in drab khaki overalls. All these soldiers knew what had happened inside the camps. One of the members of the tank crews, Lt. Avi Grabovsky – he was later to testify to the Israeli Kahan commission – had even witnessed the murder of several civilians the previous day and had been told not to "interfere."

And in the days that followed, strange reports reached us. A girl had been dragged from a car in Damour by Phalangist militiamen and taken away, despite her appeals to a nearby Israeli soldier. Then the cleaning lady of a Lebanese woman who worked for a US television chain complained bitterly that Israelis had arrested her husband. He was never seen again. There were other vague rumours of "disappeared" people.

I wrote in my notes at the time that "even after Shatila Israel's 'terrorist' enemies were being liquidated in West Beirut". But I had not directly associated this dark conviction with the Cite Sportif. I had not even reflected on the fearful precedents of a sports stadium in time of war. Hadn't there been a sports stadium in Santiago a few years before, packed with prisoners after Pinochet's coup d'état, a stadium from which many prisoners never returned?

Among the testimonies gathered by lawyers seeking to indict Ariel Sharon for war crimes is that of Wadha al-Sabeq. On Friday, 17 September 1982, she said, while the massacre was still (unknown to her) underway inside Sabra and Shatila she in her home with her family in Bir Hassan, just opposite the camps. "Neighbours came and said the Israelis wanted to stamp our ID card, so we went downstairs and we saw both Israeli

d Lebanese Forces (Phalangists) on the road. The men were separated from the women." This separation – with its awful shadow of similar separations at Srebrenica during the Bosnian war – were a common feature of these mass arrests. "We were told to go to the Cite Sportif. The men stayed put." Among the men were Wadha's two sons, 19-year-old Mohamed and 16-year-old Ali and her brother Mohamed. "We went to the Cite Sportif, as the Israelis told us," she says. "I never saw my sons or brother again."

The survivors tell distressingly similar stories. Bahija Amin says she was ordered by an Israeli patrol to go to the Cite Sportif and the men with her, including her 22-year-old brother, were taken away. Some militiamen – watched by the Israelis – loaded him into a car, blindfolded, she claims. "That's how he appeared," she says in her official testimony, "and I have never seen him again since."

It was only a few days afterwards that we journalists began to notice a discrepancy in the figures of dead. While up to 600 bodies had been found inside Sabra and Shatila, 1,800 Palestinians had been reported as "missing." We assumed – how many assumptions are in war – that they had been killed in the few days between 16 September 1982 and the withdrawal of Phalangist killers on the 18th, that their corpses had been secretly buried outside the camp. Beneath the golf course, we expected. The idea that many of these young people had been ordered outside the camps or after the 18th, that the killings were still going on while we walked through the camps, never occurred to us.

Why did we not think of this at the time? The following year, the Israeli Kahan commission published its report, condemning Sharon but ending its own inquiry of the atrocity of 18 September, with just a one-line hint – unexplained – that several hundred people may have "disappeared" at about the same time. The commission interviewed no Palestinian survivors but it was allowed to become the narrative of history. The idea that the Israelis went on handing over prisoners to their bloodthirsty militia allies never occurred to us. The Palestinians of Sabra and Shatila are now giving evidence that

this is exactly what happened. One man, Abdel Nasser Alamel believes his brother Ali was handed to the Phalange on the morning of the 18th. A Palestinian Christian woman called Milaneh Boutros has recorded how, in a truck-load of women and children, she was taken from the camps to the Christian town of Bikfaya, the home of the newly assassinated Christian president-elect Bashir Gemayel, where a grief-stricken Christian woman ordered the execution of a 13-year-old boy in the truck. He was shot. The truck must have passed at least four Israeli checkpoints on its way to Bikfaya. And heaven spare me, I realise now that I had even met the women who ordered the boy's execution.

Even before the slaughter inside the camps had ended, Shahira Abu Rudeina says she was taken to the Cite Sportif where, in one of the underground "holding centres", she saw a retarded man, watched by Israeli soldiers, burying bodies in a pit. Her evidence might be rejected were it not for the fact that she also expressed her gratitude for an Israeli soldier – inside the Shatila camp, against all the evidence given by the Israelis who prevented the murder of her daughters by the Phalange.

Long after the war, the ruins of the Cite Sportif were torn down and a brand new marble stadium was built in its place, partly by the British. Pavarotti has sung there. But the testimony of what may lie beneath its foundations – and its frightful implications – might give Ariel Sharon further reason to fear an indictment.

(Milli Gazette, Dec. 16–31, 2000)

Follies of Americana

Pushpa M. Bhargava

[t is strange that the country which is the scientific and technological leader of the world – the United States – is politically amongst the most naïve.

What happened in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania on September 11 was extremely tragic. It made us all shed tears for that wanton loss of innocent lives and destruction of one of architectural wonders of modern times. But an even greater tragedy has been that we were all aware and fearful that something like what happened on September 11 was bound to happen sooner or later, for on increasing number of occasions, the powerful government-business nexus in the U.S. has steamrolled the voices of reason in the not-so-powerful quarters outside of the U.S. The WTO and TRIPS agreements that are weighted heavily in favour of the developed countries led by the U.S. are examples. The unjustified decades-old suppression of the Palestinians is another.

The American fiasco in Vietnam, which created guerrilla warfare and demonstrated that superiority in terms of weapons cannot always win wars today, would be yet another example. In 1982, in Hanoi I had a two-hour-long meeting with General Giap, the legendary Vietnamese hero who defeated the French, the Americans and the Chinese, when he gave me a copy of his autobiography. The last page of this book states: Responding to his (Ho Chi Minh's) call, the entire nation rose up with great determination, high fighting spirit, superb heroism and noble sacrifices and achieved resounding military exploits from the very first winter days of the resistance war. Our people overcame untold hardships during the three thousand days and nights of combat, continuously increasing in strength, winning ever bigger victories – and ceaselessly

advancing on the road to the spring of the nation, the historical victory of Dien Bien Phu.”

Vietnam won because of the justifiability of its cause and the determination of its people.

It is strange that the U.S. has only now woken up to international terrorism. What about Kashmir? Why did the U.S. and its allies not stop all aid and supply of arms to Pakistan to prevent terrorism in Kashmir? In fact, it is perfectly possible that if we all had collectively nipped the terrorism in Kashmir in the bud, there would have been no black September 1985. Whose arms have the terrorists around the world been using anyway?

Biological weapons

In 1992, I was part of an eight-member high-power international group set up by the U.N. to draft a document for the Third Review Conference on the Biological Weapons Convention held in September of that year in Geneva. Even at that time, I had pointed out that the wars of tomorrow will be wars of wits, and that a nuclear arsenal or conventional defense system against traditional, nuclear and chemical weapons would be of no help. I had specifically pointed out that biological weapons were going to be the weapons of the poor countries. They are far more dangerous than any other weapons: cheap and easy to produce, easy to deliver, and extremely potent.

A few kilograms of botulin added to water supplies around the world could wipe out the entire world population, and one can easily make the above quantity through a genetically engineered strain of *Clostridium botulinicum* in one's backyard. In fact, at least one country has such strains available. Further, biological weapons would only kill people and not damage property. In the case of botulin, with further dilution as time passes by, and the decay of the activity of botulin with time, the water will be potable again for the survivors. In fact, when during the Iraq-Kuwait war Saddam Hussein talked about the final weapon he had in his arsenal, our prediction was that he was referring either to anthrax spores

or to botulin, both of which could be easily put on Scud missile warheads.

In the summer of 1992, Mathew Meselson, the distinguished American scientist, and I were invited to address the Ambassadors of various countries in Geneva, at a lake-side resort in Switzerland, where I mentioned the possible plans of Saddam Hussein. After the meeting was over, the organisers introduced me to two German scientists, saying that they were the persons who had actually set up the biological weapons factories in Iraq. These were the factories that were later unearthed by the CIA. I later on learnt that there was a scramble for anthrax vaccine for the American troops and Israeli citizens. But there wasn't enough of the vaccine available around the world. Thus the American defence services were aware of this possibility. It was providential that Saddam Hussein didn't use his biological weapons against Israel.

The U.S. has played a major role in creating and sustaining the international terrorism and, sooner or later, the country was going to pay for it. It is sad – very sad – that it all happened this way, but it should have been even sadder if biological weapons were used.

That the U.S. deserves sympathy of the entire civilised world for the September 11 incident has never been in doubt, and it has had this sympathy and concern in abundance from every civilised quarter of the world. But hasn't been India deserving of similar sympathy for Kashmir where more people have been the victim of international terrorism than in the U.S.? We have never had that sympathy from the U.S. or its allies.

Sane course of action

Therefore, for any sane policy decision in respect of a course of action, the U.S. should take into account the following.

(1) It must recognise that something like what happened on September 11 was inevitable for reasons I have given above.

(2) It must recognise that the defences of the U.S. have never been impregnable. The wars of tomorrow – if they take place (and let us hope they would not) – would be more battles

of wits than battles of weapons. And as far as wits are concerned, Africa, Asia and Latin America might even have an edge over the U.S.

(3) The U.S. must also recognise that it has not been the only country that has been a victim of international terrorism which has existed in plenty before September 11 and has caused much greater harm to humanity than what was caused on that black day.

In view of this, the same course of action for the U.S. would imply the following:

- (a) Taking positive steps to ease out tensions around the world by ensuring that justice is done – for example, with respect to Palestinians.
- (b) Taking steps to prevent exploitation of the developing and the under-developed countries, for example, through modification of the WTO and TRIPS agreements. An example of such exploitation would be the “gift” of unlabelled genetically engineered soya bean flour by the U.S. for the victims of the Orissa famine.
- (c) Bringing together all truly democratic countries to fight against international terrorism – be it in Kashmir or on the east coast of the United States or in Central Europe.
- (d) Devising a new arms sale policy along with the participation of all the major arms-producing countries of the world, which would ensure that no arms fall in the hands of terrorists or countries that harbour or aid terrorists.
- (e) Helping, with the cooperation of other countries to create a climate that will ensure that chemical and biological weapons will never be used.
- (f) Ensuring that all decisions with respect to the above are taken collectively.
- (g) Remembering that till 1970, there were no security checks, no hijacking and no terrorism and asking the question, why was that so.

Alternatively, if America decides, in haste and unilaterally, to wage a war somewhere to satisfy its ego and its hurt, ignoring how and to what extent other countries have been hurt in various ways over the last five decades, it shouldn't expect unqualified support of other countries, including India.

Responses

In the wake of the unsettled airline schedules following the September 11 terrorist attack, I cancelled a 17-day visit to the U.S., beginning September 19. To my faxes cancelling the visit, I receive numerous responses, all stating on their own the first of the above two alternatives. I quote below two of these responses.

Dr. Maxine Singer president of the Carnegie Institute, Washington and a Member of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, wrote: "The world has really been turned inside-out by last week's events. The magnitude of the acts and the use of innocent people as weapons is something that will take a long time getting used to. We are fearful that our government will act too quickly and without sufficient deep thought. Those of us who have travelled more than our President see the world differently from the way he does, and we are more aware of what has been burdening other countries for so long. We can only wait and hope for intelligent actions."

Dr. Bill Rutter, also a Member of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, and Chairman of the Chiron Corporation in California – a leading biotech company of the U.S. – said, "This is not just a tragedy for the U.S., but for all of humanity. Extremism, especially when it becomes destructive of persons, is indeed the scourge of the world we collectively must somehow restrict or eliminate. How do we take on this task as a community of countries? No one country should or could take this on unilaterally. I only hope our country's leadership understands the complexity of this situation and has the wisdom to tackle the fundamental issues involved."

There is a hierarchy between data, information, knowledge and wisdom. One needs knowledge for wisdom but wisdom is not just knowledge, just as knowledge is not just

information and information not just data. Let us hope that the U.S., which is without doubt a great country committed democracy, wisdom will prevail over bravado in this crucial moment in human history.

(The Hindu, Oct. 9, 200

Retaliation will be Full of Risks, Hard Choices

Paul Richter

The terrorist attack on the United States put powerful pressure on President Bush to retaliate swiftly, even as US officials and outside experts warned that any such military operation will involve risks and tough choices.

Although US officials said Tuesday they have no conclusive evidence showing who was responsible, many government officials and terrorism experts consider Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden the prime suspect. If the Bush administration eventually concludes he is to blame, the Pentagon could choose a variety of responses.

The military could launch air attacks on Bin Laden's camps in Afghanistan and seek to strike his cells in the Middle East and around the world. As the Clinton administration learned, hitting the Bin Laden operation with enough force to deter future terrorism will be tough. Unlike nations with military infrastructures and targets such as tank divisions and air defence batteries, Bin Laden's network is widely dispersed, consisting of relatively mobile terrorist cells with few easily identifiable targets. Also, the suicide terrorists who carried out Tuesday's attacks have such strong motives that any counterattack may not deter them – and could even strengthen their resolve. "The risk is (Bin Laden) could bounce up in a few days, unhurt, and make the United States look like a paper tiger," said Kenneth M. Pollack, a former National Security Council official.

Added one ranking defense official from the Clinton administration: "Like so many things, this is a lot harder than it sounds." Another option for the Pentagon would be to hit the military and command infrastructure of the Taliban government in Afghanistan. The Taliban, which has acquiesced to Bin Laden's activities in its country, vigorously denied any involvement and condemned Tuesday's attacks.

Explosions shook Afghanistan's capital of Kabul hours after the attacks in the United States, but Bush administration officials denied any responsibility. In a briefing at the Pentagon, Defence Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said that "in no way is the United States government connected to those explosions." The United States learned how difficult it can be to strike back at Bin Laden after the 1998 bombing of two US embassies in East Africa. The military launched several dozen Tomahawk cruise missiles at Bin Laden's camps in Afghanistan, knocking down some crude buildings but missing him and his key lieutenants. The Pentagon also struck a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan that US officials believe was tied to Bin Laden.

Rather than showing the world American resolve, however, the 1998 retaliation reinforced an impression that cruise missiles alone don't represent a strong military response. "Politically, they've gotten a bad name, Pollack said. "If you just fire a bunch of cruise missiles it looks half hearted."

A Pentagon strike now would probably be more deadly if carried out by manned aircraft. Cruise missiles are unmanned and are typically fired from hundreds of miles away. The \$1 million weapons are best used to blow up large fixed targets while cluster bombs and other anti-personnel munitions carried by manned aircraft probably would be more effective against Bin Laden's terrorism cells.

Any U.S. strikes could draw complaints from some quarters – most likely the Russian, Chinese and French – about American "unilateralism." Yet those concerns may be dwarfed in the United States by the desire for a strong response. In an interview with CNN, former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger said that the attack "is comparable to Pearl Harbor. And we must have the same response, and the people who did it must have the same end as the people who attacked Pearl Harbor." Another former secretary of State, Lawrence S. Eagleburger, declared that "there's only one way to deal with people like this, that's to kill some of them. They need to be hit."

(*Times of India*, Sept. 13, 2001)

Holiday from History

The Discovery of Another America

Shashtri Ramachandaran

We live in a unique moment. The pause between the “End of History” and the commencement of a new cycle. The pause between the 21st century beginning with a big bang and the bigger bangs to follow that will shape a new world. In this pause, pregnant with the contrary pulls of rage and reflection, is the potential for discoveries that promise deliverance. In this quest, not for revenge and punishment, but for justice triggered by the events of September 11, the greatest accomplishment would be to discover ‘Another America.’

There is an America we are all familiar with. The America that rose to global power and influence, to awesome wealth and military might. An America fed on Hollywood horror and catastrophe productions. Land of Liberty that was either unmoved – or moved to act against the larger humanity – by the horrors that claimed millions of lives from Vietnam to West Asia; from Sarajevo, Macedonia and Lebanon to Congo, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. An America, that was “a dangerous nation while remaining a righteous one”, as commentator William Pfaff observed. The perspicacity and foresight of George Kennan, US envoy to Stalin’s Soviet Union, appears almost eerie in retrospect. “I do not think the US civilisation of these last 40 to 50 years is a successful civilisation. I think this country is destined to succumb to failures which cannot be other than tragic and enormous in their scope”.

Where does one set out to discover Another America? Listen to the voices of Americans themselves – the many who ought to have been heeded before but can be ignored now only at greater peril to both America and the rest of the world. And these voices are not only that of Kennan or Pfaff. These are the voices of sanity and reason, western voices, alarmed at the West vs Rest confrontation being courted by Washington.

Voices of men and women who are equally horrified at Samuel Huntington's theory of "clash of civilisations" being fleshed out in a monstrous military regalia for an unthinkable violent end-game.

In the flood of e-mail pouring in, there is a wealth of feeling – grief, shock and sorrow; but also humanity, sense of history, an urge to understand 'the other' and an acute awareness of how a military offensive driven by hate, if not racial and religious prejudice, could be self-destructive. One of the first responses was from Ronald Takaki, professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and celebrated author of multicultural studies such as *A Different Mirror and Stranger from a Different Shore*. "The danger of the Pearl Harbor analogy is that it could convey to the galvanised American people a sense of overconfidence that would quickly dissolve into disillusionment and dismay once we realise how this new war is more complicated than World War II. By comparing the tragedy at the WTC to Pearl Harbor, the media are inciting Americans toward hatred and violence toward Muslims everywhere, including in the US."

Replying to observations of filmmaker Shyam Benegal Takaki says, "We have reason to be fearful of the future. The American people are angry, whipped up in fervent patriotism told by our leaders that there is a military solution to the terrorist 'act of war'. Bush's language has put him and our nation in a box". Jonathan Power, associate at the Transnational Foundation for Peace, notes that America is threatened not by nuclear-tipped missiles from unknown rogue nations, "but by small groups of angry men who, although prisoners of their zealotry, know well enough that much of the world whilst not agreeing with them understands their frustration. To deal with this effectively requires a new way of looking at the world". Jeff Kolnick, associate Professor of history in Southwest State University, Minnesota, hopes that "the talk of vengeance and anger present in the speech of my country's leaders turn to sober reflection on the causes of the tragedy and upon what course of action will, in the long run, make the US a safer nation."

Robert Verchick, professor of law, University of Missouri, is convinced that the US response cannot be patterned after now-obsolete strategies of conventional war. To interpret the harbouring of terrorists as an 'act of war' may seem axiomatic on a moral level, but on a legal level, it drastically changes the notion of war under international law", says Verchick and prays "that our government advisors understand this". Curtiss de Young, a devout and God-fearing man who leads urban reconciliation efforts in Minneapolis, referring to tragic events elsewhere seeks advice from friends here "in your context such tragedies are not new." He feels that the situation calls for peacemakers "with a willingness to see the facts of history, the truth of today, and the need for pairing wrongs identified. Unfortunately, my country, the USA, did not live up to its responsibility in this regard."

Thus runs the flow of reflections, illuminated with sparks of brilliance from the responses of Seamus Milne, Noam Chomsky and Robert Fisk among others. In America, it takes a Chomsky to point out that if anyone wants to cause immense damage in the US, they are unlikely to launch a missile attack. There are innumerable easier ways that are basically stoppable." Yet the situation will, very likely, be exploited to increase pressure to develop the missile defence project.

The America of Columbus, a techno-corporate safe haven from the primitive, barbaric "evil" outside should now wake up to how false the reality shows on TV are. There are Americans who want to live in the world of the real, and prevent a Terrible Tuesday from happening not just in the US but anywhere. In such a world, the impulses would be driven by an urge to eliminate not an Osama bin Laden and his look-alikes but, more importantly, the causes and conditions of terrorism, rooted in glaring disparities in the distribution of global wealth and power. The "war" against terrorism, as declared by Washington can only compound the cruelty of this quality.

There are other Americans impatient for the world to cover Another America because they, more than the terrorists, fear the US of today. The alternative is to live with

the demonised Other, and the consequences of the world's only superpower unleashing its Ramboesque fury against some of the poorest countries, such as Afghanistan, where millions are barely able to scrape together a livelihood.

(Times of India, Sept. 20, 2001)

Eye-for-an-Eye will Make us Blind

C. Jayanthi

Since time immemorial, humankind has strived for peace. We all know we can thrive only in peacetime. For culture and civilisation to flourish and for us to experience the kind of well being we have over the past several decades, we need peace.

To think of matters, material and spiritual, we need to harbour peace. Now that we seem to have a war virtually on our doorstep, we need to understand that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. If through centuries of war, the human civilisation has not achieved eternal peace, one more show of strength might not provide the answer to the world's woes. "Where there is peace, God is", says a proverb. Those who declare war in the name of religion or a cause or simply to wreak revenge should understand that it will only lead to more hatred and more wars. No religion advocates war, all religions advocate peace. Very often, human suffering is caused by just a handful of people because of their brutal interpretation of religion and dogmatic policies. This is done by a few in the name of the majority who are just ordinary, peace-loving people who go about their lives without harming a single soul. Yet, in their name armies are raised, armaments are sold, war cries sounded and people killed en masse. The Buddha has said, "Many are those who are not aware that one day we all must die. And those who are aware of it appease their quarrels". We should, therefore, remember that quarrels or wars do not get over in a day and seldom are they won. The scale of suffering that ordinary people are subject to in their wake is unimaginable. However, we never seem to learn. We have made this world into a theatre of war rather than a theatre of peace. How many more widows and orphans do we need to prove the futility of war?

The Qur'an has said, "God invites you to the Home of Peace. He guides whom He will to a straight path. Those who do good works shall have, a good reward, and more besides. Neither blackness nor misery shall overcast their faces. They are heirs of Paradise: in it they shall abide forever". Need one say more? No religious text therefore advocates war. Yet over and over again, we seem to believe that the only solution to any of our problems is through war. One day a nation's pride is hurt, another day a territory is snatched, the third day lives are destroyed in a terrorist strike – and the solution we have figured out is war? Are we plotting the extinction of the human race? We say, 'Let's negotiate, let's talk', yet in the end we are too impatient to resolve our issues through peaceful means. On man, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi won Independence for this country through peaceful non-cooperation. Hasn't the world seen it work? Haven't we learnt anything at all from it?

The Bible has said, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men". Which religious text therefore advocates hunt out every single person, do not rest until there is bloodshed and, destruction spreads until the end of the earth. No text.

War therefore is in the minds of men. We let it invade our personal spaces, we let it invade relationships and we let it destroy people. We even use words as weapons in the absence of arms. We do not strive towards peace; we only talk about it as pay lip service. In the end when there is war, we feel justified as we have then extended war zones to larger spaces that encompass the entire world. No one should be untouched by it. Settling scores, that's the way we see it. What right then do we have to bring children out into this world? Are we able to promise them any better than what we have experienced? We anyway are at war with each other and sooner or later we will throw them into it. We have taught them that they are living in a sane world but then that world is meaningless fiction, it does not exist. Harm and destruction is the reality and our children who were brought into this world with hope will experience the opposite. But then, we forget that.

The German dramatist Bertolt Brecht has said, "The wickedness of the world is so great you have to run your legs off to avoid having them stolen from under you". Let us run then, let us run like mad from the rumbles of war and create the religion of love that God intended for us and the apostles of peace advocated. The violent images and the shrill demands for war and that are beamed day in and day out on our television screens only serve to aggravate the situation. However, as John Milton said, "Peace hath her victories/No less renowned than war". Let us then sound the bugles of peace.

(Times of India, Sept. 20, 2001)

Case Against Osama Thin on Facts: Experts

Hasan Suroor

The evidence presented to British Parliament on Thursday linking Osama bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda organisation to the September 11 terrorist attacks in the U.S. has been received with widespread scepticism both on legal grounds and in terms of its diplomatic value in convincing the Arab world, in particular, that the West has an open and shut case against him. The 17-page dossier, which begins with the disclaimer that it does not purport to present a "prosecutable case", has been described by legal experts as being too thin on facts to stand scrutiny in a court of law. Even the circumstantial evidence, according to them, is based more on conjecture than hard facts. Analysts said the Government's claim that there was more material which it was not possible to make public for security reasons was unlikely to convince those who were being asked to support military action against Afghanistan on the strength of this document.

"This may carry weight with politicians used to public immunity certificates but not with lawyers who require direct and admissible evidence," said Mr. Anthony Scrivener, a lawyer, in *The Times*. He pointed out that a legal case could not be made simply on the strength of motive and the fact that the attacks on September 11 bore "hallmarks" of a bin Laden operation. There were many terrorist groups who shared "the same hatred of the Americans who might have carried out this atrocity", he said arguing that the main weakness of the document was that it sought to present "assertion" as evidence".

The lawyer also questioned the legal basis of the claim that since three of the 19 suicide hijackers had been identified as "associates of Al-Qaeda" it proved that Al-Qaeda and by further association bin Laden were behind the operation. "The use of the word 'associates' gives the impression that they are not members of that organisation and I would certainly wish to examine the evidence to see what associates really meant".

Another leading legal expert, Mr. Nick Blake of Mat Chambers with which the Prime Minister's wife, Ms. Chel Blair, is associated, was quoted as saying that more evidence would be needed to obtain a legal indictment of bin Laden. In the best, the proof produced so far could support charges of incitement to murder, he told *The Daily Telegraph*. "I don't think they have got much evidence that would indict him for murder. Nothing in the disclosed material shows active participation in the murders (the deaths caused by the attacks) as opposed to giving approval to terrorist attacks."

Political pundits too were deeply sceptical saying that the Government had failed to produce a "smoking gun" that would prove bin Laden's guilt beyond doubt. "The dossier relies heavily on circumstantial evidence about the previous atrocities carried out by bin Laden and Al-Qaeda and the similarities between these acts and the atrocities on September 11..." said *Independent*. Its West Asia correspondent, Mr. Robert Fisk, regarded as an authority on Arab politics, said the document was "unlikely to rally the Arab world to the West's war on terrorism". He said only nine of the 70 points in the dossier related to the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and these "often rely on conjecture than evidence". It was not going to "cut much ice in Saudi Arabia or other Gulf States."

The Times, in an analysis, called the document "puzzling and worrying piece of work". There is no evidence presented that directly links bin Laden to September 11. It asserted its foreign affairs commentator, Mr. Brownwyn Maddox, calling the document "a political dance, not a serious attempt to preach to the unconverted". *The Guardian*, in an editorial headed "Still No Smoking Gun", described the evidence as "almost worthless from a legal point of view" and said Mr. Blair's case that there was sufficient ammunition to hang bin Laden boiled down to "two words: trust me". And outside the hawkish political circles, not many seemed to be inclined to do that.

(*The Hindu*, Oct. 6, 2001)

After Attacks, It's Time for Human Rights Violations

*Lois Romano &
David S. Falppis*

In a high-security wing of Manhattan's Metropolitan Correctional Centre, an unknown number of men with middle-eastern names are being held in solitary confinement on the ninth floor, locked in 8 x 10 foot cells with little more than cots, in blankets and, if they request it, copies of the Koran. Every 60 hours, guards roust them to conduct a head count.

They have no contact with each other or their families and limited access to their lawyers. Their names appear on no federal jail log available to the public. No records can be found on any court docket in New York showing why they are detained, who represents them or the status of their cases.

The nearly absolute secrecy surrounding the detentions is a growing concern to civil libertarians and legal observers, who fear basic rights are being violated as authorities pursue a terrorist conspiracy.

"How many are being held? On what basis? What kind of judicial review is available? All of those seem to be important questions to answer," said Steven Shapiro, national legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union.

A 23-year-old Saudi student who was released on Tuesday night said he missed three weeks of school and was evicted from his San Diego apartment during his 17-day detention as a material witness, which he described as a humiliating and terrifying experience.

"They don't call you by name... They call you (expletive) terrorist," said Yazeed Al-Salmi of guards at the Manhattan facility, where he was held for nine days. Al-Salmi was released after he testified for two hours before a federal

grand jury about his encounters with one of the hijackers in the Sept. 11 attacks.

A full-time accounting student at Grossmont College, Al-Salmi said his incarceration "changed my life... I was counting every single minute of every single day. I was praying to get out soon."

It is unknown whether the detainees are considered conspirators in the worst act of terrorism in US history, valuable witnesses or merely people who might have information because they crossed paths with the terrorists responsible for the deaths of more than 5,000 people on September 11.

(Times of India, Oct. 16, 2001)

Retribution, not Revenge

Rajeev Bhargava

In India, as elsewhere, everyone understood the cry for help: Horror writ large on terror-stricken faces, the choked voices of people who saw it happen, the hopeless struggle to control an imminent breakdown in public, the unspeakable grief. For one moment, the pain and suffering of others became our own.

In a flash, everyone recognised what is plain but easily forgotten – that inscribed in our individual selves is not just our separateness from others but sameness too. Despite all socially constructed differences of language, culture, religion, nationality, perhaps even race, caste and gender, we share something in common. Amidst terror, acute vulnerability and unbearable sorrow, it was not America alone that rediscovered its lost solidarity. In these cataclysmic events, people across the globe reclaimed their common humanity.

As we empathised with those who escaped or witnessed death and relived the traumatic experiences of those who lost their lives, we knew of a grave moral wrong done to individuals. But the victims of September 11 were not just subjected to physical hurt or mental trauma, they were recipients and carriers of a message: from now on they must live with a dreadful sense of their own vulnerability. This was transmitted first to other individuals in New York and Washington, then quickly to citizens throughout the democratic world. The catastrophe on the East Coast has deepened the sense of insecurity of every individual on this planet.

However, this was not the only message sent by the perpetrators. When we focus on our collective identities, other disturbingly ambivalent, morally fuzzy messages are revealed. They are less likely to sift good from evil, more likely to divide than unite people across the world. One message which the poor, the powerless and the culturally marginalized would like to communicate to the rich, the powerful and the culturally

dominant is this: we have grasped that any injustice done to us is erased before it is seen or spoken about; that in the current international social order, we count for very little; our ways of life are hopelessly marginalized, our lives utterly valueless. Even middle-class Indians with cosmopolitan aspiration became painfully aware of this when a country-wide list of missing or dead persons was flashed on an international new channel: hundreds of Britons, scores of Japanese, some Germans, three Australians, two Italians, one Swede. A few buttons away, a South Asian channel lists names of several hundred missing or dead Indians, while another flashes the names of thousands with messages of their safety to relatives back home.

Not all intentional wrongdoing is physically injurious to the victim, but every intentionally generated physical suffering is invariably accompanied by intangible wounds. The attack on September 11 did not merely demolish concrete buildings and individual people. It tried to destroy the American measure of its own self-worth, to diminish the self-esteem of Americans. Quite separate from the immorality of physical suffering caused, isn't this attempt itself morally condemnable? Yes, if the act further lowers the self-worth of people with little enough. But this is hardly true of America, where the ruling elite ensures that its collective self-worth borders supreme arrogance, always over the top. Does not the Pentagon symbolise this false collective pride?

Amidst this carnage, then is a sobering thought. It occurs more naturally to poor people of powerless countries. Occasionally, even the mighty can be humbled. In such societies, the genuine anguish of people at disaster faced by the rich is mixed up with an unspeakable emotion which, on such apocalyptic occasions, people experience only in private or talk about only in whispers.

The moral horror of the individual dimension of the carnage is unambiguous and overwhelming. But as we pause to examine its collective dimension, a less clear, more confusing moral picture emerges. How, on balance, after putting together these two dimensions, do we evaluate this more complicated

moral terrain? The answer has to be swift and unwavering. For now, the focus must remain on the individual and the humanitarian. To shift our ethical compass in the direction of the collective weakens the moral claims of the suffering and the dead. This is plainly wrong. Nor is it enough to make merely a passing reference to the tragedy of individuals, a grudging concession before the weightier political crimes of a neo-imperial state are considered. The moral claims of individuals are currently supreme. But we cannot permanently screen off the collective dimension. To do so would obstruct our understanding of how tragedies of individuals can be prevented in future; in any case, in the long run it extends another already existing moral wrong.

Though victims have reacted with quiet dignity, there is also the expression of moral revulsion and, even as some people preposterously become the victims of this newest hatred, the American President has promised revenge. How do we assess these retributive emotions? At issue here is not hatred driven by malice or spite, but a morally grounded hatred. It is not wrong for a woman to hate the rapist who has permanently harmed her. How then can anything be wrong with hating ruthless strategists who achieve their political goals by the indiscriminate slaughter of innocent civilians? It is extremely abnormal if self-respecting persons do not experience righteous anger, even hatred towards those who have wronged them. It is even morally permissible to desire to hurt the wrongdoer. Yet it may not be wise or morally appropriate for victims to act on these feelings. It is imprudent because retaliatory action sparks off escalating cycles of revenge and reciprocal violence. Retaliation by the U.S. and counter retaliation will almost certainly plunge the entire world into greater suffering, pain, vulnerability and insecurity. Revenge can unleash even greater tragedies: it may unravel an unappeasable thirst for violence.

If lessons of history teach us anything at all, it is that the barbaric acts of one group solicit equally barbaric acts from others. We must ensure that today's victims do not become tomorrow's perpetrators of much worse. No matter on whom the first blow was struck, if our aim is to terminate barbarism,

then, it must be stalled now, suddenly, and abruptly. All things considered, it is best to forgo the temptation to act on retributive hatred and feelings of vengeance. To restrain vengeful motives is wise for another reason. Undoubtedly, the massacre on the East Coast is motivated by the desire to question the economic, political and cultural supremacy of the U.S. in a radically unequal world. If and when the mightiest nation in the world retaliates, it will not be to grant equal status to offenders. It is rather more likely that, by a massive display of strength, they will be shoved further back in their less than equal place. The not so hidden text of American retaliation may be an abject lesson to all to never again dare American supremacy. Will it surprise anyone if a disproportionate and symbolic show of force to maim and crush the enemy flows from the very same motive of vengeance? It is true, of course that some acts of revenge are the wellspring of equality and refute claims of supremacy by wrongdoers. However, the spectacular show of violence on September 11 and in the days to come is likely to reveal a different warped logic of alternating claims of superiority.

We must not be forced again to witness ghost towns in other parts of the world with more terror-stricken faces, choked voice, desperately crying for help. We need retribution for sure but not revenge. American might must be restrained. Perpetrators must be brought to book in an international court of justice and tried for crimes against humanity, our common humanity. This would just be a beginning. To set a large process of reconciliation in motion, the messages of marginalized collectives hidden under the gruesome rubble of Tuesday's destruction must be decoded and discussed by moderates from all over the world. Only by proper understanding the social, cultural and spiritual basis of self-respect in our troubled times can we ever begin to address the problems violently thrown at us on September 11.

(*The Hindu*, Sept. 24, 2001)